

A HISTORY OF  
THE LEVANT COMPANY





# A History of the Levant Company

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## PREFACE

THIS account of the Levant Company does not claim to be exhaustive. On such a subject, covering a vast tract of years and touching so many aspects of national life, it would be possible to go on amassing relevant material almost indefinitely, and I am well aware of the many points at which I have stopped short; but inclinations must bow to lack of time and opportunity. It would, indeed, have been easy, even with the material actually collected, to have made this work much longer, but a firm belief in the blessedness of brevity and the financial problem of publication have combined to encourage me to jettison ruthlessly. My aim throughout has been merely to suggest the many-sided importance of the Company's work.

To attempt this involves the danger of falling between two stools, for the dual character of the Company and its agents necessarily leads me into both the economic and diplomatic fields of history, and exposes me to the charge of inadequacy and irrelevance from specialists in either sphere. The economic historian will naturally think of the Company as a commercial corporation, which, though true, is not the whole truth. The diplomatic historian will tend to regard its story merely in the light of an introductory chapter to England's part in the eastern question, which again obscures the whole behind the part. Whether I have succeeded or not in preserving a fair balance between these two aspects of the Company's work, and in presenting an adequate study of its history 'in the round', I am of course unable to judge. I can only plead that I have made the effort. No history of the Company covering its whole life exists, and my little book may at least serve to fill the gap until an abler and more detailed one appears.

I am indebted to the Council of the Royal Historical Society for permission to reproduce in my first appendix some information which I contributed to the Camden Society volume *British Diplomatic Representatives 1689-1789* (London, 1932).

I wish to express my gratitude to Sir Charles Firth, who first introduced me to the subject and directed my early studies; to Professor G. N. Clark of All Souls College, Oxford, who has given me invaluable help in their later stages; to Professor L. V. D. Owen of University College, Nottingham, and Mr. G. Ellis Flack,

Librarian there, for their unfailing readiness to aid and smooth my path; and to the officials and staffs of the British Museum and the Public Record Office, whose courtesy and patience are apparently impervious to all strain. To my father I owe constant encouragement and help without which this book would never have been written or published. Although my wife has escaped the customary function of compiling the index, my debt to her is wholly beyond redemption.

A. C. W.

1935

## CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	ix
I. The Foundation of the Levant Company . . . . .	1
II. The Early Years, 1583-1605 . . . . .	15
III. Prosperity and Adversity . . . . .	42
IV. The Factories in the Levant . . . . .	59
V. The Embassy and its Occupants, 1583-1660 . . . . .	80
VI. The Central Period of the Company's History, 1660-1718 . . . . .	95
VII. The Central Period of the Company's History, 1660-1718 ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	114
VIII. Decline . . . . .	136
IX. Decline ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	156
X. The End . . . . .	179
XI. The Organization of the Company . . . . .	205
XII. Life in the Levant Factories . . . . .	229
APPENDIXES	
I. The Ambassadors at Constantinople, 1583-1824 . . . . .	250
II. Consuls of the Levant Company at Smyrna and Aleppo . . . . .	253
III. British shipping cleared outwards and inwards—Turkey and the Levant, 1800-30 . . . . .	254
IV. The Governors of the Company . . . . .	255



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### MANUSCRIPTS

THE chief manuscript authorities are the archives of the Levant Company (State Papers 105 and 110) preserved in the Public Record Office. They consist of the following MSS.:

- S.P. 105. 107. Charter of James I.  
108. Charter of Charles II.  
109. Royal letters to the Company (1580-1804) appointing and recalling ambassadors.  
110-25. Letter books (copies of the outgoing letters of the Company to ambassadors, consuls, and other agents for the period 1606-1825).  
126-42. Copies of letters received by the Company, 1797-1825.  
143-6. Register books, 1605-1778 (containing copies of commissions and instructions to ambassadors and consuls, articles of agreement, petitions and memoranda of the Company to the government, &c.).  
147-56. Court books, 1611-1706. (Minutes of the proceedings of the general court.)  
157-65. Ledger books of the Company's treasurer in London, 1619-1803 (containing the figures of impositions collected and of expenditure in stipends and other items).  
166-8. Entry books, 1669-1710. (Entries of impositions paid in London on outward cargoes.)  
169-72. Imposition books, 1731-1808. (Entries of impositions paid in London on inward cargoes for years 1731-6, 1775-1808.)  
173. Register book. (From the Constantinople factory.)  
174-200. Chancery registers, 1648-1833. (These are from the Constantinople factory, and contain copies of factors' wills, inventories of goods, lists of effects, petitions, disbursements on behalf of the Company, consular appointments by the ambassador, and other business of the factory or its individual members.)  
201-6. Account books, 1698-9, 1732-44, 1765-6, 1779, 1804-13. (Treasurer's accounts from the Constantinople factory.)  
207. Treasurer's account book, 1721-6. (From the Smyrna factory.)  
208. Treasurer's account book, 1802-25. (London.)  
209-11. Order books, 1662-1726; 1697-1771; 1734-1818. (Orders of the general court concerning impositions, consular regulation, the general regulation of trade, and of the factories and their personnel.)

- S.P. 105. 212. Minute book of the Constantinople factory, 1806-24.  
 332-3. Register of orders from the general court, 1662-1744, 1744-1824. (Regulations for the control of trade and the guidance of officials. Entries of all admissions to the freedom of the Company.)  
 334. Miscellaneous registers, 1678-1747. (A register of port charges and other fees payable at Smyrna.)  
 335-8. Register of assemblies, &c., 1698-1825. (Minute books of the Smyrna factory.)  
 339. Chancery register (Smyrna), 1708-23.  
 340. Consular correspondence, 1818-22 (from Smyrna).  
 341. Miscellaneous papers.

Of the above MSS. the Company's letter and court books, 110-25 and 147-56, are the most informative. Between them they give a detailed and comprehensive view of the nature and organization of the Levant trade. The absence of the court books after 1706 is in some degree compensated by the survival of the two order books, 332-3.

S.P. 110. Consist with one exception (87) of Aleppo papers, a number of which are too decayed to be inspected.

- S.P. 110. 10-53. Letter books, 1634-1825. (Copies of the letters of factors at Aleppo to their business correspondents in England and elsewhere.)  
 54-9. Minute books of the Aleppo factory, 1616-1719.  
 60-6. Chancery registers, 1718-1811. (Register of deeds of partnership, powers of attorney, protests, factors' wills, &c., from Aleppo.)  
 67-8. Order books, 1696-1775. Copies preserved at Aleppo of orders and regulations made by the general court in London.  
 69. Register of assurances, 1693-1705.  
 70. Register of births, deaths, and marriages, 1756-1800.  
 71. Bills of lading, 1704-6.  
 72. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1700-1800.  
 73. Miscellaneous decayed and fragmentary letters, 1600-1825.  
 74. Correspondence and letters (original), 1700-1800.  
 87. Copies of John Murray's letters to consuls and others, 1766-9.

Of this group of MSS. the letter books (10-53) are of the greatest value. For a general survey of the trade they are overcrowded with details of prices, weights, freightage costs, local conditions and difficulties from year to year, but they give a remarkable 'close-up' of business in one factory over a lengthy period.

The following MSS. are also in the Public Record Office:

- S.P. 97. 1-55. Letter books of the ambassadors at Constantinople from Harborne to Ainslie (1779). These copies of the correspondence of the ambassadors from the foundation of the



Company are a primary authority for its history. After the Revolution of 1688 they tend to become more diplomatic and less commercial in interest, but at least down to Porter's time they throw valuable light on the Levant trade. The series is continued from 1780 in F.O. 78. 1. onwards. These are mainly diplomatic and political and become exclusively so after 1804 when the embassy was formally severed from the Company, but I have obtained some information about the trade from the earlier vols.

- S.P. 77. 1. Letters from Algiers, 1595-1670.  
 S.P. 103. 72. Treaty papers, 1577-1698. Contain the articles of agreement made between the Company and Sir Thomas Glover, Sir John Eyre, and Sir Daniel Harvey.

- Customs 3 (Ledgers of imports and exports, 1697-1780).  
 4 (Ledgers of imports, beginning 1792).  
 8 (Ledgers of exports, beginning 1812).

These provide in statistical form an annual index of the character and extent of the Company's trade.

### *MSS. in the British Museum*

- Addit. MSS. 33052. Memorandum of the Company to the Duke of Newcastle, 1739 (ff. 181-2), concerning the state of its trade.  
 „ „ 34799. Trumbull's own account of his embassy for the period 1687-8.  
 „ „ 38223. Memorandum (ff. 139-40) by John Morrison, dated August 16, 1788, containing a concise account of the trade carried on by the European nations to the Levant.  
 „ „ 38229. A dissertation (ff. 146-71) by F. Daniel on the Turkey trade, dated March 1794.  
 „ „ 38330. Memorandum of the Company to the Duke of Newcastle, 1740 (ff. 240-1), on the state of its trade.  
 „ „ 38347. A memorandum (ff. 209-10) on the Turkey trade, dated 1786.  
 „ „ 38348. Hints about the Turkey trade (ff. 99-111), dated January 22, 1788, and signed G.C.  
 „ „ 38349. Tables of imports and exports relating to the Turkey trade in the eighteenth century (ff. 339-53).  
 „ „ 38350. Memorandum of the Company to Pitt, February 2, 1790, on the state of its trade.  
 „ „ 38351. Memorandum of the Company to Pitt, 1792, (ff. 243-5), on quarantine difficulties.  
 „ „ 38375. A letter (ff. 81-90) signed G.B. (probably George Baldwin), addressed to 'Sir', on the expediency of opening the Turkey trade. 1782.  
 „ „ 38394. Memorandum (ff. 80-97) by W. Fawkener (from the office of the Committee of the Privy Council

- for trade) to the Duke of Leeds on the Turkey trade, dated October 19, 1790.
- Addit. MSS. 8880. Letters relating to Lord Paget, 1690-1700. Mainly diplomatic—but they contain some references to the Company and its affairs.
- Egerton MSS. 918. Letters relating to Lord Paget, 1692-6. Similar to the above.
- Stowe MSS. 219-20. Copies of Lord Chandos's letters. March 1681, December 1687.
- Harley MSS. 306. Standing ordinances of the Levant Company (ff. 72-4), circa 1590.
- Lansdowne MSS. 34. Memorandum (f. 177) by Lord Burghley (1580-1?) on the advantages of the Turkey trade.
- "      "      60. Petition of the Turkey and Venice merchants to be incorporated into one body (f. 8), circa 1590-1.
- Sloane MSS. 2902. Papers concerning trade, taxes, &c., collected by Abraham Hill.

### *MSS. in the Bodleian Library*

Bodleian pamphlets, Folio 665.

- (i) A list of the members of the Levant Company, 1701 (ff. 97-8).
  - (ii) The Company's expenses at Aleppo, Michaelmas 1697-Michaelmas 1708 (f. 186).
  - (iii) Salaries paid by the Company at Aleppo (f. 188).
  - (iv) A list of the English factory at Smyrna with all names, January 1704 (f. 192).
  - (v) A list of the English factory at Constantinople with all names, January 1704 (f. 194).
- Rawlinson MSS. 255, 256, 257 A. contain the royal instructions to Sir Daniel Harvey, Sir John Finch, Lord Chandos, and Sir William Soames. Also copies of the letters to the sultan and the grand vizier taken out by Lord Chandos.

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1635-40? MUN, THOMAS. *England's treasure by Forraigne trade.* (In McCulloch, *op. cit.*)

1641. ROBERTS, LEWIS. *The Treasure of Traffike.* (In McCulloch, *op. cit.*)

1680. *Britannia Languens, or a Discourse of Trade.* Author unknown. (In McCulloch, *op. cit.*)

1681. *The allegations of the Turkey Company and others against the East India Company, relative to the management of that trade, with the answer of the East India Company thereunto.* B.M. 522. i. 5 (8).

1696? *Reasons for preserving the Publick Market of Blackwell Hall and restraining the Levant Company of Merchants from deferring their shipping as long as they please.* B.M. 816. m. 14 (69).

1718. *An account of the number of Woollen Cloths of all sorts exported by the Levant Company from England to Turkey in 46 years, from Xmas 1671 to Xmas 1717.* B.M. 357. b. 6 (49).

1718. *Paragraphs of some letters to prove the reasonableness of the Levant Company's late order to carry on their trade by general ships.* Bodleian Pamphlets, Folio 666, ff. 288-9.

- 1718-19. The case of several merchants of the Levant Company complaining of the restraint of their trade. B.M. 357. b. 6 (37) and Bodleian Pamphlets, Folio 666, ff. 286-7.
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# I

## THE FOUNDATION OF THE LEVANT COMPANY

OBSCURITY veils the beginnings of relations between England and Turkey. With the Byzantine Empire the English had no direct contact either diplomatic or commercial, and the visit to London of Manuel Palaeologus, the last emperor but one of the east, in the winter of the year 1400 to seek for help against the Turks was an isolated episode which was fruitless in its result. Such trade as then existed between England and the Mediterranean was in the hands of Venetians, Genoese, and Florentines, and to the Englishman of the time the Turk, if he existed at all, was but a shadowy figure inheriting the opprobrium formerly heaped upon the Saracens by generations of crusaders. A few stray adventurous individuals<sup>1</sup> kept alive the tradition of the crusades and crossed swords with the pagans in Hungary, the great cockpit of the contending faiths, but at home so little was known of the activities of the Turks, or so little interest was taken in them, that even the fall of Constantinople in 1453 passed without notice in contemporary English chronicles.

But during the fifteenth century English merchants slowly pushed their ventures into the Mediterranean, and direct contact was established with Italy.<sup>2</sup> Little is known of the details of the movement, but it is almost certain that those who established this Italian traffic soon carried their activities farther east, and began to trade in the Levant, to which the possessions of Venice in the eastern Mediterranean would form natural stepping stones. Two isolated attempts to open this distant trade in the middle of the century have come to light, both made by the 'ful notable worshipful marchaunt' Robert Sturmy of Bristol. In 1446 he sent the *Cog Anne* with pilgrims, and a cargo of wool, tin, and other goods to Joppa, but on the way back she was sunk by storms off the Greek coast. Eleven years later (1457) he himself sailed in the *Katherine Sturmy* with a cargo of

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Robert Champlayn, who had fought many times in Hungary, had been wounded, captured, and ransomed (*Patent Rolls*, 1485-94, p. 188).

<sup>2</sup> Lipson, *Economic History*, i, p. 505; Scott, *Joint Stock Companies*, ii, p. 83. We know that Edward IV occasionally hired one of his own ships to be sent to the Mediterranean. In 1478 the *Antony* sailed from London for Italy carrying wool shipped by a wealthy alderman, William Heryot, and in 1482 the *Mary de la Toure* left Southampton with a similar cargo (Power and Postan, *Studies in English Trade in the 15th Century*, p. 45).

lead, tin, wool, and cloth to 'divers parts of the Levant' where he procured pepper and other spices in return; but the Genoese, enraged by this intrusion on and threat to their own trade, determined that the *Katherine Sturmy* should never reach home. So they lay in wait for her near Malta and there they 'spoiled' Sturmy's vessel and another.<sup>1</sup> No other record has been found of any similar venture from Bristol before Tudor times, but early in the reign of Henry VII there is evidence that English vessels were regularly visiting Candia, Chios, and other Venetian dependencies to secure cargoes of sweet malmsey wines,<sup>2</sup> and Hakluyt recorded that by 1511 'diverse tall ships of London . . . and of Southampton and Bristow' were carrying English cloth to Crete, Cyprus, and Syria in exchange for silks, spices, oils, carpets, and mohair yarn.<sup>3</sup> From this period onwards proofs of the existence of growing commercial links with the Levant are not lacking. In 1513 Henry VIII appointed an Italian, Justiniano, to be consul for the English at Chios,<sup>4</sup> and seven years later Comio de Balthazari (a merchant of Lucca, residing in Crete) was also given a patent to be 'for life, governor, master, protector or consul of the English nation there'.<sup>5</sup> In 1530 an Englishman, Dionysius Harris of London, was made consul for life in Crete,<sup>6</sup> and Hakluyt mentions by name several other English merchants who were living in the Levant about this time.<sup>7</sup> His papers also contain accounts of several voyages of English ships to Crete and Chios in 1534, 1535, 1550, and 1553.<sup>8</sup> In this last year Anthony Jenkinson was given liberty to trade throughout the Turkish dominions by Suleiman the Magnificent.<sup>9</sup> Travellers like Sir Richard Shelley were beginning to visit the Levant; the ill-fated admiral, the brother of the Lord Protector Edward Seymour, fought against the Turks in Hungary in 1540; other English adventurers sailed with Charles V in his expedition against Algiers in 1541;<sup>10</sup> and that the English were well known to the Porte at this time is proved by a clause in the treaty made between Francis I of France and Suleiman in 1535, which provided for the admission of the King of England to the agreement if his ratification was sent within eight months.<sup>11</sup>

Then for the next thirty years the infant trade between England

<sup>1</sup> Power and Postan, pp. 225-9.    <sup>2</sup> Williamson, *Maritime Enterprise*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> Hakluyt, *Voyages*, v, pp. 62-3.

<sup>4</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, xiii, p. 353.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. xv, p. 766.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. xiv, p. 389.

<sup>7</sup> Hakluyt, v, p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. v, pp. 68, 71, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 109-10.

<sup>10</sup> Playfair, *Scourge of Christendom*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Saint-Priest, *Mémoires sur l'ambassade de France en Turquie*, p. 362.

and the Levant almost ceased. It was 'wholly left off' . . . 'utterly discontinued and in maner quite forgotten'.<sup>1</sup> There were several reasons for this early failure. In the first place the long dangerous channel of trade through seas infested with pirates, and the difficulties of trafficking amidst a semi-barbarous people who despised the trader and had little compunction in plundering the 'Giaour' (Infidel) called for greater capital and more powerful organization than individual adventurers could provide. The Barbary corsairs and Turkish rapacity must have been potent deterrents to further development; and the chronic state of war between Christian and Moslem in the eastern Mediterranean which marked these years when Turkish power was at its height made peaceful trading almost impossible. The fall of Rhodes (1522), of Cyprus (1570), and the growth of the sea-power of the Turks which enabled them to tighten their grip upon the islands of the Archipelago all contributed to the interruption of intercourse with England.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, little inducement existed to brave the perils of the Levant in order to secure the richly prized commodities of the east, for an easier and cheaper source of supply presented itself close at hand. In the past the products of the orient had been conveyed along the great trade routes of the middle ages which all converged upon the shores of the Levant, either via the Caspian to the Black Sea, via Persia and Aleppo to the Syrian coast, or via the Red Sea to Alexandria; and all three routes had finally joined at Venice. From this great clearing house oriental commodities were distributed all over Europe. They were conveyed to England by a fleet of merchant vessels known as the 'Flanders galleys' which had been dispatched annually from about the year 1317 onwards;<sup>3</sup> but in the sixteenth century this trade was severely curtailed by three adverse factors. In the first place, although it has been proved that the

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson (in *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 18); Hakluyt, v, pp. 167-9. The Levant Company's Charter of 1581 also stated that the Turkey trade had 'not heretofore in the memory of any man now living "been" known to be commonly used and frequented by way of merchandise by any the merchants or any subjects of us or our progenitors'. But the trade was not forgotten or relinquished for quite so long a period as is here suggested, for in 1552 two royal ships, the *Jesus of Lubeck* and the *Mary Gonson*, were chartered by some merchants for a voyage to 'Levants-end' (Williamson, *Maritime Enterprise*, p. 233).

<sup>2</sup> Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, ii, pp. 57, 150; *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 18. Undated memorandum of William Harborne: 'After that the Turk took Scio and other lands within the Archipelago he drove our nation clear from the said trade so as for thirty years and more the same was wholly left off and no English ship durst pass in the Straits.' (Chios was taken by the Turks from the Genoese in 1570.)

<sup>3</sup> Lipson, i, p. 468.

Turkish sultans as they extended their conquests over Syria and Egypt did not attempt to suppress the traffic done by the infidel through their dominions, and that the old trade routes were in fact never severed by the rise of Ottoman power as was once believed,<sup>1</sup> it is none the less probable that Venetian trade with the Levant was diminished by the state of the eastern Mediterranean in the middle of the century. Two wars with the Porte (1537-40 and 1571-3) and the loss of some of her territory in the Aegean and on the Greek mainland must have told upon the commerce of the Republic; but Turkish sea-power, which reached its zenith during this period, was a greater because a more constant menace. The trade routes leading to Constantinople, Smyrna, Aleppo, and Alexandria swarmed with fleets of corsairs which paid little respect to treaties and—like the English buccaneers in the west—combined plunder with a holy war; and if this sufficed to throttle the infant trade from England to the Levant for a time, it is certain that Venetian interests must also have suffered. At the same time as difficulties thus developed in the Levant the Venetians were drawn into the long conflict which Charles VIII of France had provoked by his invasion of Italy and a second adverse influence began to depress their commerce as the strain of the war increased. But it was the discovery and development of the route to the east round the Cape of Good Hope by the Portuguese<sup>2</sup> which more than any other factor ruined the trade of Venice, for experience soon proved that oriental goods could be brought to Europe cheaper, more easily, and more safely that way than they could via the long caravan routes and perilous sea passages of Mesopotamia, Syria, and the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> Hence a great deal of the traffic formerly done along the old trade routes was diverted, a process which was helped by the deliberate efforts of the Portuguese to stop up the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, and the Venetian ships no longer found the same rich markets and profitable cargoes in the Levant ports. Between them these various facts produced a drastic reduction in the trade of Venice, and its outlying branches were the first to feel the growing weakness of the Republic. Among these was the old connexion with England. As

<sup>1</sup> Lybyer, 'The Ottoman Turks and the routes of oriental trade' (*Eng. Hist. Review*, xxx, pp. 577-88).

<sup>2</sup> Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape and reached India in 1497-8.

<sup>3</sup> The Venetians were prompt to recognize the danger. On the news of the discovery of the Cape route, wrote a contemporary, 'All Venice was alarmed and amazed and the wiser heads took it for the worst news that could have reached us.' See Brown, *Studies in Venetian History*, i, p. 353.

a result of the League of Cambrai no Flanders galleys reached England between 1509 and 1518, and the last fleet ever sent left Southampton in 1532. Henceforward only individual ships came occasionally, until October 1587 when the last one was wrecked off the Isle of Wight and all the crew and cargo were lost.

Englishmen were thus obliged to look elsewhere for their supplies of eastern goods, and for the moment they found another source available just across the Channel, for the new traffic with the east opened up by the Portuguese quickly passed, at its European end, into the hands of the wealthy merchants of the Netherlands, and Antwerp superseded Venice as the great depot for eastern merchandise. It was therefore needless for English traders to venture the hazards of the voyage to the Levant when the desired goods could be purchased more cheaply within a few miles of their own shores.<sup>1</sup>

But the suspension of trade with Turkey was not of long duration, and interest in the near east continued to develop. It was, indeed, impossible to ignore the Turks when Suleiman brought them to the gates of Vienna and filled all Europe with alarm, and as early as 1522 the significance of the fall of Rhodes, the last Christian stronghold in the Levant, was felt even as far away as England. Fifty years later, when the news of the victory of the Spanish and Venetians over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571 arrived, Holinshed recorded that in London 'there were bonfires made through the citie, with banquetting and great rejoycing as good cause there was for a victorie of so great importance to the whole state of the Christian commonwealth'. Nor was this growing recognition of the importance of the Turks due wholly to the fact that their military successes thrust it upon a distant and indifferent people. One of the most far-reaching results of the great revolution in thought and feeling which reached England from the continent in the sixteenth century was to release the minds of Englishmen from their former parochialism and to give them a wider interest in other peoples and other lands. In such circumstances the undying romance of the east, and the glamour and mystery surrounding the grand signior and his empire which loomed so large upon the confines of Europe, was not likely to escape their attention, and the works of the Elizabethan dramatists prove an interest in and a familiarity with Turkey which cannot have been a sudden phenomenon. Thus Marlowe in his *Tamburlane* recounted the tragic story of Sultan Bayezid I; Kyd

<sup>1</sup> Lipson, ii, p. 335.

presented on the stage Suleiman the Magnificent and the fall of Rhodes; and Shakespeare made cryptic references to Turkish customs, which pre-supposed a general knowledge of them.<sup>1</sup>

As Elizabeth's reign approached its apogee several factors began to encourage the idea of resuming trade with the Levant. Owing to commercial quarrels in the fifteen-sixties the old intercourse between England and Antwerp was severed,<sup>2</sup> and consequently it became more difficult to obtain an adequate supply of goods from the east. The revolt of the Netherlands, which soon followed, further dislocated the flow of oriental commodities into England, while Spanish claims on Portugal, which culminated in the conquest of the little kingdom by King Philip II in 1580 and in the absorption of its empire into the dominions of Spain, threatened to give control of the entire traffic to the east to a power which was rapidly becoming the arch-enemy of England. Such considerations would naturally tend to revive ideas of tapping the Levant market again; and behind them, needing little encouragement to adventure, lay the expanding and ambitious mercantile spirit of the time, eager to develop new avenues of trade and profit in any quarter of the globe, known or unknown. The Venetians were still trading in the Levant, if on a diminished scale, and the French had also successfully established themselves. Suleiman had granted them a treaty of commerce and friendship in 1535, consuls had been appointed in the Levant ports, and it was under the protection of the French agents that English adventurers had traded there in the middle of the century.<sup>3</sup> The success of the French awoke the rivalry of their island neighbours, while the lull in the Turkish crusade against Christendom which followed the death of Suleiman offered more peaceable and stable conditions for the promotion of a profitable trade. Moreover, as hostility to Spain became increasingly intense, the fact was not overlooked that if contact could be made the Turk might prove to be a useful diversion in the Mediterranean against

<sup>1</sup> *King Henry IV*, Pt. II, Act v, Scene ii. The king:

Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear:  
This is the English, not the Turkish Court;  
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,  
But Harry Harry.

A reference to the custom of murdering all brothers and near male relatives which the Turkish sultans practised at their accession in order to remove possible centres of opposition or conspiracy.

<sup>2</sup> Lipson, ii, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Pouqueville, *Mémoire historique et diplomatique sur le Commerce et les Établissements Français au Levant, &c.*, pp. 549-56; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, p. 84.

the menace from Madrid. France had used the infidel in her long struggle with Charles V and although Elizabeth indignantly repudiated any suggestion of similar conduct as a slur upon her loyalty to Christendom, the subsequent activities of the first two English ambassadors at Constantinople prove conclusively that the political motive was present from the start in the reopening of communications with Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

The first steps towards this end were taken by two of the great London merchants of the time, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper. Osborne laid the foundations of his career by marrying the daughter and heiress of William Hewitt, a member of the Clothworkers' Company, to whom he had been apprenticed, and he ultimately succeeded to his father-in-law's business and estates. This prosperous start, backed by his own abilities, soon made him one of the chief figures in the mercantile community of the capital, and before he died he had traversed the usual *cursus honorum* of civic life<sup>2</sup> and achieved a knighthood. He also sat in parliament during the last five years of his life. His commercial interests were extensive, for he was a prominent member of the Company of Merchants trading to Spain and Portugal and also of the Eastland Company before his enterprise and wide vision re-established the Levant trade. With argosies on all the seas and ventures in every clime he was in fact the prototype of the merchant princes of the modern world; and in little over a hundred years after his death his family, in the person of the famous Sir Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, acquired the ducal coronet of Leeds. Of his colleague Richard Staper less is known. He seems to have eschewed all public honours, but it is clear that he was equally prominent and enterprising as a merchant. Like Osborne he was a member of the Spanish Company; he traded to Brazil; his name appears among the Barbary merchants who were incorporated in 1585; and he was prominent among those who laid the foundations of English trade to India and the far east.<sup>3</sup>

In 1575 the two merchants dispatched at their own expense agents who travelled through Poland to Constantinople, and one of

<sup>1</sup> See the accounts of Harborne's and Barton's embassies in *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, pp. 1-27; Pears, *Eng. Hist. Review*, vol. viii, pp. 439-66; Conyers Read, *Walsingham*, vol. iii.

<sup>2</sup> He was Lord Mayor in 1584. His life is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>3</sup> Epstein, *Early History of the Levant Company*, pp. 54, 57; Hakluyt, xi, pp. 26, 30; vi, pp. 419. Staper died in 1608. His epitaph (in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate) describes him as 'the greatest merchant in his time, the chiefest actor in discoverie of the trade of Turkey and East India.'

these representatives, Joseph Clements, after remaining for eighteen months, secured from the reigning sultan Murad III a safe conduct for William Harborne, a factor of Osborne's, to have free access into the Turkish dominions.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Harborne set out, accompanied by Clements, in July 1578, and again travelling through Poland they arrived at Constantinople at the end of October. Here Harborne traded under the French flag, but Jacques de Germigny, the French ambassador, soon discovered that he was endeavouring to secure full freedom of trade for English subjects, and was backing his claims by hints to the Porte of the value of Elizabeth's alliance against their common enemy Spain.<sup>2</sup> Germigny's opposition failed to stifle the negotiations and the Englishman won from the sultan a general promise of liberty to trade in Turkey, which, after an exchange of letters between Murad and Elizabeth, was expanded in June 1580 into a more formal grant of twenty-two articles or capitulations defining the liberties accorded to English subjects trafficking in Ottoman lands.<sup>3</sup> This was an extension of a Byzantine custom which the Turks had adopted. The Venetians and Genoese both got capitulations from the Greek empire in the eleventh century, and they were renewed by the Turkish sultans after the taking of Constantinople. The English capitulations, like all such later grants made to Christian states, were based upon the terms of the alliance which had been arranged between Francis I of France and Suleiman the Magnificent in 1535; and they provided, in theory at least, a solid guarantee for the persons and goods of English merchants in Turkey. The English were to come and go by land and sea with their merchandise and not be molested; if they were by any means imprisoned they were immediately to be released; no poll tax was to be exacted and the English were to pay only 'our lawful toll and custom'; the appointment of consuls, who were to decide disputes between the merchants of their nation, was sanctioned; no one was to be arrested for the crime of another unless he had stood as surety; any English who had been enslaved were to be released provided that, if they had been sold, the purchase price should be paid back to the buyer; the wills of dead merchants

<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 168-9.

<sup>2</sup> Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa*, iii, pp. 419-22.

<sup>3</sup> These capitulations are in Hakluyt, v, pp. 178-83. In his letter to Elizabeth the sultan had promised the merchants who sought facilities for trade in his dominions the same advantages as those of any other nation. In her reply the queen asked that the grant should be extended not to 'two or three men only' but 'to all our subjects in generall', and this was done in the capitulations.



were to be respected; Turkish sailors were to help English ships during storms or when shipwrecked; the crews were to be allowed to buy victuals without hindrance. The concessions were generous, but everything depended upon their strict recognition and enforcement by the Turkish authorities, and the English were destined to learn by more than a century of experience that the capitulations could sometimes be stretched or twisted by an unscrupulous high official to cover the very kind of offences they were designed to prevent.

Armed with these privileges Harborne now returned to England. But no sooner had he departed than Germigny, anxious that no new competitors should enter the rich trade of the Levant, hitherto shared by his countrymen and the Venetians, and that the clause in the French capitulations which admitted the English to traffic in Turkish waters under the French name and flag should not be contravened, secured the cancelling of the privileges newly promised to them.<sup>1</sup> It appears that Harborne promptly went back again to Constantinople, but that, although he won some support in high quarters there, he failed to secure the restoration of his grant, and once more returned to England.<sup>2</sup> From what happened later it is probable that his lack of any official status was a stumbling-block, and that the Porte disliked dealing with a private merchant. In spite of his apparent failure, however, Harborne may well have had good grounds for retaining hopes of eventual success, for the paper confirming previous treaties between the two countries which was sent to King Henry III of France by the sultan in July 1581 shows that the Porte was not hostile to relations with England—but was primarily anxious to retain its old understanding with France. ‘The Queen of England,’ runs this document, ‘desires to enter into friendly relations with my Porte. We are anxious that you shall be the intermediary, and should the Queen send an ambassador to treat of this matter and should he come with your recommendation we will make every possible concession.’<sup>3</sup> It is probable that King Henry ignored this suggestion, but the fact that preparations continued to be made in England to establish a trade with the Levant seems to prove that some assurance of winning back the cancelled capitulations existed.

<sup>1</sup> This was said to have been achieved within six weeks of Harborne’s departure (*Cal. S. P. Venetian*, 1581–91, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S. P. Venetian*, 1581–91, p. xxxi; *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S. P. Venetian*, 1581–91, p. 52.

At home the project had the most influential backing. The government was early informed,<sup>1</sup> and Queen Elizabeth herself had paid the expenses of Harborne's first journey to Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> Her two chief ministers also showed keen interest. Burghley made a close study of the products of the Levant and of the advantages and conditions of trade there,<sup>3</sup> while Walsingham discussed the advantages to be gained by opening up a direct trade with Turkey in a cogent and detailed memorandum in 1580. He favoured it because it would help to promote the English mercantile marine and so indirectly maintain the navy, and because the profits of the trade, hitherto reaped by foreign middlemen, would be transferred to English pockets. But he foresaw the danger of opposition from the French and the Venetians, both diplomatically at Constantinople and probably by force, i.e. by attacks on English shipping in the Mediterranean. The former difficulty he proposed to counter by sending 'some apt man' to remain at Constantinople in order to combat the intrigues of the two rival ambassadors; the latter he met with the suggestion that the trade should be carried on in large well-equipped convoys of ships at least twenty in number sailing preferably in winter when the galleys of the Mediterranean powers would be confined to harbour.<sup>4</sup> Walsingham was clearly interested in the new venture, and the merchants could confidently count upon his support, and that of the lord treasurer, when they applied, either in 1579 or 1580, for a charter of incorporation granting them a monopoly of English trade with the Turkish dominions.

This was the normal method of commercial organization at the time, and its extension to the Levant was fully justified by the peculiar conditions which attended traffic in such a remote and semi-civilized area. It was essential to maintain an ambassador and consuls to govern the merchants who settled there, and, in their public capacity, to secure an adequate protection from the Turkish authorities for the persons and goods of the factors. As the English

<sup>1</sup> The royal ambassador to the Sultan of Morocco in 1577 secured a promise of protection for all English ships passing the coast of Barbary on their way to the Levant, which seems to prove that the government was already aware of the plan to revive the trade and was supporting it (Hakluyt, vi, p. 290).

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 6. The amount was 1,500 ducats.

<sup>3</sup> There is a memorandum by Burghley on the advantages of a trade with Turkey (the vent of English goods, the benefit to the customs and shipping, &c.) in Lansdowne MSS., 34, f. 177.

<sup>4</sup> Conyers Read, iii, pp. 373-4; Cheyney, *Hist. of England, 1588-1603*, I, p. 377; Epstein, pp. 245-51.

government was not strong enough at this period to support the burden and responsibility of maintaining relations with a distant power like Turkey, it was necessary to surrender that duty to some powerful corporation of merchants, and in return to grant it the monopolistic powers which alone could ensure its strength and stability.

After long consideration the desired patent was issued to Osborne and his friends on September 11, 1581. It took the form of a grant to Osborne, Staper, Thomas Smith, William Garret, and others to be nominated by them to the total number of twelve, of the sole right to trade with Turkey for seven years. All other English subjects were prohibited from trafficking in the dominions of the grand signior. Under the terms of their grant the patentees were further given authority to make laws and ordinances—not being repugnant to the laws of the realm—for the better government of their merchants and trade; and to place the royal arms of England with a red cross on the flags of their ships. In return for the monopoly of trade they received they were obliged to import and export enough goods to pay customs duties to the value of £500 per annum during six out of the seven years of the grant. Returns were to be made to the admiralty of all ships and mariners employed, and the master of the ordnance was to have the right to inspect all ordnance, powder, and munitions before ships sailed and also on their return. Osborne was named as the first governor of the Company and if he died Staper was to succeed to the office. In the event of both dying the Company had power to elect a successor. The queen, finally, reserved for herself the right to nominate two members of the Company, additional to those already mentioned, and to annul the charter on one year's notice being given.<sup>1</sup> The original members of the new Company were partly drawn from the merchants trading to Italy, whose business had been diminished in recent years by Spanish hostility and high tariffs at Venice, and who were now recompensed by admission to the Levant trade.<sup>2</sup> Lewis Roberts, who was an official of the Levant Company early in the following century, and therefore near enough in time to have first-hand information, stated that the Barbary merchants also had a considerable share in its foundation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Letters Patent are in Hakluyt, v, pp. 192-202.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, ii, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Roberts, *Merchants Mappe of Commerce*, pp. 79-80. Efforts had been made to trade with Morocco as early as 1413 (Rymer, viii, p. 773). Roberts (p. 235) said the Barbary trade began in Henry VII's reign, but Hakluyt (vi,

Twelve months were now spent in negotiation between the queen and the Company over the position—and more particularly over the payment—of Harborne, whom it was proposed to send back to Constantinople to re-establish a foothold and to found a trade.<sup>1</sup> Anxious to invest its representative with as much power and prestige as possible, the Company desired Elizabeth to give him a commission as her ambassador. In view of the letters which had been exchanged between her and the sultan this was the obvious step to take, but unfortunately the question was complicated by the financial problem. Harborne's mission would involve heavy expenses for travelling and equipment; he would require a salary; and it was essential to offer rich presents to the sultan and his chief officers if a favourable audience was to be obtained. Elizabeth was ready enough to send Harborne out as ambassador, but, following Walsingham's recommendation, she intended that the Company should bear all the attendant expenses, whereas the merchants insisted that the crown ought to meet the costs of the mission. The result was a long delay, but the outcome was a foregone conclusion. The queen's parsimony triumphed in the end, and the Company was left to foot the bill. Then, on November 20, 1582, Harborne received the royal commission constituting him 'our true and undoubted orator, messenger, deputie and agent' at the sultan's court.<sup>2</sup> The avoidance of the word 'ambassador' is curious, but Harborne was from the first generally accorded that title and rank.<sup>3</sup> From its inception therefore the embassy at Constantinople had a dual aspect; its holder was at once a royal representative, commissioned by the sovereign and employed in diplomatic duties, and a commercial

pp. 136-7) calls Windam's voyage of 1551 'the first voyage for traffique' made to Morocco. The Barbary merchants petitioned to be incorporated in 1567 and 1574 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1547-80, pp. 290, 490) and were eventually given a Charter in 1585 (Hakluyt, vi, pp. 419-25).

<sup>1</sup> Some of the points which engaged the attention of the government are preserved in the undated Memo 'Matters to be considered for the honour of your Majestie and of the Realme' (Lansdowne MSS. 112, Number 24, f. 109). Among these were: whether to send a present to the sultan because they are apt to be looked upon as tribute; whether the ship carrying out the nuncio should be a royal one or not; should the nuncio deliver the queen's letters to the sultan or leave it to be done by an agent left there when he returned; should the nuncio ask for the same allowance as was given to the ambassador of France and other powers; should he ask for further commercial privileges; what replies should he make to possible questions about the state of England and the Spanish war, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 221-4.

<sup>3</sup> In his letter of credence to the sultan Harborne is expressly called ambassador (Hakluyt, v, pp. 224-8). In his commission appointing Richard Forster consul in Syria 1583 Harborne calls himself 'Her Majesty's ambassador'.

agent paid by a company of merchants, and pledged to safeguard and promote their business interests.

Armed with this commission and with letters of introduction from Elizabeth to the sultan, Harborne sailed from England in January 1583, and arrived at his destination on March 26. Both the French ambassador and the Venetian bailo exerted themselves to prevent his reception, and tried to discredit him as a mere 'stipendiary of the merchants'. Germigny threatened that if Harborne was received it would mean a breach of the Franco-Turkish alliance, and Morosini, the bailo, who was ordered to spend 15,000 chequins if necessary to prevent recognition by the Porte, tried to persuade the grand vizier that the admission of the English to trade would have an adverse effect upon the Turkish revenue from customs. 'The French and Venetians have to the uttermost opposed themselves against us,' reported Harborne, 'but their malice contraried.'<sup>1</sup> The vizier told Germigny that 'there was no occasion for such a row', and that the Porte was open to all who desired peace; and on May 3 Harborne was received by the sultan with all the ceremony accorded to a French ambassador.<sup>2</sup>

The Englishman proved to be an admirable selection for his difficult task. He knew the value of presents in an oriental atmosphere and distributed them with a lavish hand among the principal officials in Constantinople; he had a quiet but dogged pertinacity which gave him a great advantage over Germigny who flew into a passion when things failed to go as he wished; and he possessed a streak of patriotic boastfulness in his make-up which made him on all occasions the ready herald of his country's greatness. When he complained to the grand vizier that the other ambassadors went about saying he was only a merchant, he told him that 'he was a great noble, greater than any other here; and even if that were not so, they had no right to consider his private position, but only the magnificence of the queen his mistress'; and he actually came to blows with the capitan pasha who stated that the English ships were common pirates.<sup>3</sup> This capacity for a rather flamboyant patriotism evidently became something of a legend, for Nash, writing in 1598, spoke of 'mercurial-breasted Mr. Harborne . . . who . . . hath noised the name of our island and of Yarmouth<sup>4</sup> so tritonly

<sup>1</sup> Paper from Constantinople, May-August 1583, in S.P. 97. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1581-91, pp. xxxiii-xxxv, 67, 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxxvii, 172.

<sup>4</sup> Harborne came from Great Yarmouth.

that not an infant of the cur-tailed skin-clipping pagans but talk of London as frequently as of their prophets tomb at Mecca'.<sup>1</sup> He was a good publicity agent, skilled in advertisement, and his enthusiasm was probably not without its effect upon his hosts.

It is clear that they met his advances half-way from political motives; for the sultan saw in Elizabeth a potential ally against Spain, and said that he would never expel from his Porte the foes of his foes.<sup>2</sup> Harborne had therefore little difficulty in vanquishing the resistance of his French and Venetian colleagues, and he not only secured the renewal of the cancelled capitulations but in addition, either in 1583 or later, he won from the Turks a reduction of the customs duties payable by English merchants from 5 to 3 per cent., thereby placing his countrymen in a more favoured position than any of their rivals.<sup>3</sup> The new French ambassador, Jacques de Savary de Lancosme, was still urging the sultan to expel the newcomer as late as 1586, but Harborne remarked quietly, 'I think that he wont be quite strong enough to turn me out'—and so the event proved.<sup>4</sup> The Englishman had firmly laid the foundations of his country's influence in the near east, and never again was it in any real danger of extinction by rival influence.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1581-91, pp. 56, 93.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, xiii, p. 444. Abstract of Wm. Harborne's ten years' service to her majesty in foreign travel, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1581-91, pp. 154, 157.

## II

### THE EARLY YEARS, 1583-1605

ONCE established at Constantinople Harborne took active steps to organize the trade of the infant Company. For this he had been granted very extensive powers by the queen: he could nominate consuls; decide at which ports and towns the trade was to be carried on; enact laws for the governing of English subjects trading in the Levant and punish breaches of them; and, in general, was 'to doe and fulfil all and singular things whatsoever which shall seeme requisite and convenient for the honest and orderly government of our said subjects and of the maner of their traffique in those parts. Promising assuredly, and in the word of a prince that whatever shall be done of our sayd orator and agent in all or in any of the premisses, not repugnant and contrary to our lawes, shall be accepted ratified and confirmed by us'. Acting on these powers Harborne in 1583 appointed Harvey Millers to be consul 'in Cayro, Alexandria, Egypt and other parts adjacent', and Richard Forster as consul 'in the parts of Alepo, Damasco, Aman, Tripolis, Jerusalem and all other ports whatsoever in the provinces of Syria, Palestina, and Jurie', ordering him to reside at Tripoli.<sup>1</sup> Two years later (March 1585) he appointed John Tipton consul in Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.<sup>2</sup> Consulates were also established by him on Chios and at Patras (for the Morea), but the dates of their foundations have not survived.<sup>3</sup> Some English merchants were living on the island of Zante at least as early as 1586,<sup>4</sup> though there does not seem to have been a consul there; while at Aleppo John Barret, who went out from England with John Newbery in 1583, apparently acted as English consul until his death about 1586.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning Harborne was called upon to fight with increasing vigilance on behalf of the rights of those committed to

<sup>1</sup> The two commissions (dated April 25 and June 20, 1583) and a letter of instructions to Forster are in Hakluyt, v, pp. 259-63.

<sup>2</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 276-80. Tipton was in Algiers as early as 1580 (Playfair, p. 26) and was referred to by Sir Edward Osborne as 'our commissarie' in 1584 (Hakluyt, v, pp. 268-70). The French had established consuls at Algiers 1564 and Tunis 1578 (Pouqueville, pp. 556-7).

<sup>3</sup> There was a consul at Patras by 1585 (Hakluyt, v, pp. 285-6).

<sup>4</sup> Hakluyt, vi, pp. 40-41.

<sup>5</sup> He is described as the first English consul at Aleppo in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, viii, p. 452. He was dead by 1586 (Hakluyt, v, pp. 290-1).

his charge. It was one thing to secure capitulations from the grand signior; it was another and more difficult one to see that the rights so granted were always respected. For the Franks (as all Europeans were called in Turkey) were regarded by the Turks in the same light as Jews had been in England in the middle ages: they were sheep to be shorn of the golden fleece they produced through their trading, and few pashas could resist the temptation to 'squeeze' the Giaours by the imposition of 'avantias' (illegal extortions) often on the most frivolous pretences. False accusations, demands for excessive duties and customs, obstruction, confiscation of goods, imprisonment—all of which needed only an adequate *douceur* to remove—became part of the normal experience of the little factories in the Levant, and the correspondence of the Company for the next 150 years was filled with reports from the various consulates of squabbles with the local officials over their attempted, and usually successful, spoliations. One of the very first ships sent out by the Company to Tripoli in Barbary in 1583 was confiscated along with its cargo and the crew enslaved. For this and other breaches of the capitulations Harborne sought relief from the sultan, securing imperial commands of redress to the offending agent, and he seems usually to have succeeded in the end in compelling restitution and recognition of the English privileges. If the machinery of Turkish despotism was slow moving, the sultan's writ was still respected throughout his dominions; but as the empire rapidly disintegrated in the following century Harborne's successors found that the edicts of the grand signior were powerless in his outlying provinces. The pashas of Egypt and of the Barbary states in particular openly defied their nominal suzerain.<sup>1</sup>

In England the Company began with widespread support. The Bishop of London condemned it on the ground that the trade through the Mediterranean would lead to the capture and enslavement of more Englishmen by the Barbary corsairs,<sup>2</sup> but his was an isolated protest. Not only the wealthiest merchants, but also some of the royal councillors subscribed to the Company; and even the queen herself was said to have contributed.<sup>3</sup> She certainly lent 10,000 lb. weight of silver to Osborne and some of his fellow

<sup>1</sup> Thus Roe reported in 1624 (*Letters*, pp. 241-3): 'The pirates of Algiers and Tunis have cast off all obedience to this empire not only upon the sea where they are masters, but presuming to do many insolences even upon the land and in the best ports of the grand signior.'

<sup>2</sup> Cheyney, i, pp. 381-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Spanish*, 1580-6, p. 432.



adventurers in October 1582.<sup>1</sup> The wording of the letters patent was ambiguous about the actual organization of the Company and might be interpreted to cover either a joint stock or a regulated undertaking, but the evidence proves that in its early days the trade was conducted upon a joint-stock basis.<sup>2</sup> Ships were quickly chartered and a trade began which, according to Camden, proved 'very gainful' from its inception. Profits up to 300 per cent. were said to be made<sup>3</sup>. Cloth and tin were sent out to Constantinople, Chios, Syria, and Egypt, and in return raw silk, mohair, cotton wool and yarn, carpets, drugs, spices, currants and indigo were brought back. By 1584 the Company claimed that it had sunk £45,000 in establishing the trade, that its ships had frequented ten of the Levant ports, and that further capital was needed to finance its extending business. In the first five years of its existence it boasted of employing 19 ships (including the largest then known in the merchant service) and 782 seamen in making 27 voyages; and that it had paid £11,359 in customs.<sup>4</sup> The cargo of one of its ships in 1588 realized over £70,000.<sup>5</sup> It began to build vessels of its own in addition to hiring them, and Hakluyt's pages prove that small squadrons of merchantmen were repeatedly traversing the Mediterranean bound for the Levant ports; while Osborne and Staper, whose restless ambition was already seeking new fields to open, had sent John Newbery in 1583 from Aleppo down the Euphrates to India in the hope of pushing the trade farther afield and of developing still closer contact with the fabulous markets of the east.

On the other hand loss by piracy was a regular and heavy charge upon the Company, and as open war with Spain developed in 1587 its trade was for a time almost completely in abeyance

<sup>1</sup> Murdin, W., *Collection of State Papers . . . in the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1759 edition), p. 781. The money was repayable in five years, 2,000 lb. weight being returned annually. Scott (i, p. 70) suggests that this silver was part of the booty of Drake's great voyage round the world.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Sanderson, *Travels*, pp. 130-1, Company's letter to the Aleppo Factors, June 1586, from which it is clear that the Company was then buying and trading as a unit. In a petition of 1591 the members stated that the trade had hitherto been carried on by a joint stock (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, pp. 169-70). I am unable to say whether the joint stock was wound up and the profits divided at the end of each voyage, as was the practice in the early days of the East India Company, or whether it was allowed to run on without interruption for the duration of the charter.

<sup>3</sup> Macpherson, ii, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Addit. MSS. 38348, f. 99; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1581-90, pp. 147, 708. On one ship it paid £620 in customs duties. The ships were of 100-300 tons, and carried crews of 25-60 men.

<sup>5</sup> Sanderson, p. 6.

owing to the dangers of the Mediterranean passage. Big profits were also offset by heavy expenses in Turkey. Harborne was paid only £200 per annum, and was promised a quarter of the profits of the trade for the first four years;<sup>1</sup> but the costs of his mission were a more serious matter. In all the Company disbursed £13,246 to meet his extraordinary expenditure, and it paid the £1,103 which it cost to bring him home in 1588.<sup>2</sup> In particular, present-giving—that indispensable lubricant of all human machinery in the orient—was an oft-recurring drain upon the resources of the merchants both at Constantinople and in their consular establishments. From the sultan downwards, the grand vizier, the pashas, quadis (judges), and customs officers all expected to be ‘refreshed’ at frequent intervals with costly testimonies of the Company’s appreciation.

Nor, in spite of their monopoly, were the merchants free from a certain amount of competition. In 1575, as an episode in the long tariff war with Venice, Elizabeth had granted to Acerbo Velutelli, an Italian of Lucca resident in England, and to others a monopoly for ten years of goods imported from Venice. The monopolists at once enforced this concession by obliging the native Venetian merchants who traded with England to pay heavy impositions on all goods brought in without their licence; and in retaliation the Venetian government laid similar duties on English commodities shipped to the territories of the Republic and an export duty on currants and wine taken away on foreign vessels. The English merchants who traded with Venice were badly hit both by the patent and by the new Venetian tariff, but in 1582 they bought out Velutelli and rescinded the monopoly. Venice, however, failed to withdraw her counter-measures; so in the following year (1583) the queen granted to the English traders to Venice a patent for six years giving them the sole right to import currants, wines, and oil from the Venetian dominions, unless in the meantime the Signory repealed its hostile tariffs. This so-called ‘Venice Company’ overlapped and trespassed upon the activities of the Levant merchants. Both bodies carried out similar cargoes; both imported wines, currants, cotton, and silks; both coveted admission to each other’s monopoly; and the outcome was competition and friction.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He stated that owing to piracies and shipwreck he got nothing out of this promise (*Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 12; Epstein, p. 77, note 29).

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Cheyney, i, pp. 386–9; Lipson, ii, p. 337; Rowland, ‘England and Turkey’ (in *English Commerce and Exploration in the Reign of Elizabeth*), pp. 72–6. They clashed especially over the currant trade in Crete (Epstein, p. 26).

The problem of their future relations came to a head when both charters expired within a few months of one another, the Levant Company's in September 1588 and the Venice Company's in April 1589. Although the letters patent of 1581 had provided for renewal if both the crown and the patentees thought fit, the Turkey merchants made no immediate application for a new grant in 1588. But they still continued to trade and to maintain their agents in the Levant, and apparently there was a tacit agreement between them and the government to connive at this anomalous position. Then the Venice Company's charter fell in, and during the summer of 1589 both bodies approached the crown for a renewal of their privileges. The Levant merchants, taking the offensive, petitioned in June for a new grant which should include Venetian as well as Turkish territory within its scope, while members of the Venice Company pleaded for the retention of a separate trade.

Thus the whole matter was laid before the government, and for twelve months Lord Burghley kept the petitioners in suspense while he pondered the question and weighed the arguments. In the spring of 1590 he submitted a questionnaire to the two groups asking for full information about their trade: the number and size of their ships; the commodities carried; the ports visited; the customs duties paid; and the expense of maintaining their establishments. The replies, which were sent in in July, proved that while the Turkey merchants had conducted a rather larger traffic than their rivals and had incurred heavier expenses in its establishment, both were valuable trades and that to a considerable extent they ran on parallel lines and handled the same kind of goods. This similarity of interests must often have been discussed in the private informal conversations of the merchants during their long periods of waiting, and from it there arose the proposal to unite the two former Companies under one enlarged charter. In the summer of 1590 a petition, signed by numerous merchants of both bodies, was presented to the government asking for joint incorporation, and for a monopoly of the trade with Venice and Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

This agreement removed one great difficulty, but the problem of the composition of the new Company remained, and again there was a long delay while Burghley listened to arguments and retorts, took the advice of the naval authorities, made memoranda and

<sup>1</sup> The petition (undated) is in Lansdowne MSS. 60, f. 8. Thirty names are attached which it was proposed to insert in the new charter.

notes, and considered the question in all its aspects.<sup>1</sup> The petitioners wished to restrict the proposed grant to members of the two original Companies, but various protests were raised against this narrow limitation by prominent merchants who were anxious to gain admission to the trade. It was contended by them that the petitioners formed a close oligarchy or handful of wealthy traders who were padding out their numbers with the names of children, apprentices, and factors in order to create the appearance of a broader base. The claimants replied by pleading the large sums they had spent in founding the trade, and by asserting that their business was not prosperous enough to stand further admissions. That this was merely 'interested' pessimism seems proved by the number of men of assured position and experience in the business world who were ready to risk their luck in the trade if given the opportunity; and the treasurer and clerk of the navy advised Burghley to widen the numbers of the new Company in order that more and larger ships might be employed and that the Turkey fleets might therefore be better able to defend themselves as they passed round the hostile shores of Spain and along the pirate-infested waters of the Mediterranean. Throughout the autumn of 1591 conferences were held, tentative lists of members were drawn up, and at length, as the year closed a settlement was reached.<sup>2</sup>

The new charter, which was issued on January 7, 1592, gave for a period of twelve years the monopoly of English trade to Venice and Turkey to fifty-three merchants named in the text; and another twenty, also enumerated, were given the option of membership provided that the right was exercised within two months, and that an admission fee of £130 was paid by each. These represented those merchants who had sought entrance and whose claims had been approved. Scope for further enlargement was also allowed by a provision for the admission of duly qualified factors and apprentices. As in the earlier letters patent the crown reserved the right to name two members at will. To this group of merchants full incorporation was granted under the name of 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of the Levant', and their organization was outlined in fuller detail than in the original grant of 1581.

<sup>1</sup> The lengthy memorandum in *H.M.C. Salisbury*, ii, p. 294 which summarizes the reasons in favour of uniting the companies clearly belongs to this period and not to the year 1579 as stated in the Calendar. Other notes by Burghley are in *S.P.* 97. 1, and *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, pp. 88-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cheyney, i, pp. 392-5; Rowland, pp. 66-85.

Osborne, though now an old man in failing health,<sup>1</sup> was justly rewarded for his great services by again being nominated as governor for the first year, but his successors were to be elected annually by the Company. Twelve members were also to be chosen to act as assistants to the governor, and were to hold office during life, or good behaviour, subject, of course, to the time limit on the charter. Another clause bestowed the right 'to ordain and constitute reasonable laws and orders for the good government of the said Company, and for the better advancement and continuance of the said trade and traffic; the same laws and ordinances not being contrary or repugnant to the laws, statutes or customs of our realm'. Customs duties were to be payable in two instalments spread over periods of three months each; but they were to be returned to the Company on all goods shipped from England and lost by shipwreck or other miscarriage; and merchandise brought in to the country and re-exported abroad within thirteen months was to pay only the import duty: its export was freed from all payments. Four ships adequately equipped with ordnance, munitions and crews were always to be permitted to sail on the Company's business without stay or hindrance from the crown save in the event of war, when, on due notice being given, they might be commandeered for the navy; and the Company's vessels were to carry 'the arms of England with the red cross in white over the same' as they had done in the past. An interesting passage, echoing the ambitions and enterprise of Osborne and Staper, extended the area of the Company's monopoly 'by land, through the countries of the said grand signior into and from the East India lately discovered by John Newberie, Ralph Fitch, William Leech and James Storie'. Between 1583 and 1591 this little group of pioneers had travelled from the Syrian coast overland to the Persian Gulf, and from there to India, Burma, and Malacca. It was an astounding feat, and to the enthusiasm of its inspirers and performers, undismayed by the length and dangers of the route, it seemed to open up a prospect of direct and profitable traffic with the El Dorado of the east. Thus eight years before the foundation of the East India Company the Levant merchants linked Hindostan and the Spice islands by commercial claims to an England as yet unconscious of her vast imperial destiny in southern Asia.<sup>2</sup>

It has generally been stated that the new Company, like its

<sup>1</sup> He died some time between January and March 1592.

<sup>2</sup> The Charter is in Hakluyt, vi, pp. 73-92.

predecessor, was organized on a joint-stock basis;<sup>1</sup> but this was not so. What actually happened is obscure, but there is clear evidence that by 1589-90, during the interval which elapsed between the expiration of the first charter and the grant of the second one, members were trading individually to the Levant. Harborne's successor Edward Barton, complaining in 1590 of his inability to get any money out of the Company, wrote 'I never had consoledge of any of their goodes save only last yeare of a small ship thatt Mr Hamden of London sent for his perticular accompte'; and again in 1591 he reported that two ships had arrived at Tripoli, one of Mr Staper's and the other belonging to Mr Hamden and Mr Banning.<sup>2</sup> During the discussions which preceded the issue of the new charter in 1592 the question of a joint stock or a regulated basis was treated as an open one and widely discussed, and the opinions expressed at the time certainly seem to have concurred in advising a continuation of the old arrangement.<sup>3</sup> Whether this was done we do not know, for the charter ignores the point, but the recently published correspondence of John Sanderson proves that by 1595 members of the Company were trading independently on a regulated basis. By then the merchants in London had their separate factors in the Levant and each individual adventured his own stock. Sanderson himself represented William Garraway, while at Aleppo George Dorrington, who figures in his letters, served Sir John Spencer; and in 1599 the factors actually refused to pay an additional consulage ordered by the Company on the ground that they had no orders from their masters to do so. At Aleppo there is mention of cloth being sent for sale by men 'that have commission from their masters or els are sufficient of themselves', and Sanderson's own business speculations show that a member of the Company was free to have a 'flutter' in silk or any other commodity entirely according to inclination.<sup>4</sup> The resolution of the Company in 1598 imposing the additional levy mentioned above on 'every trader into the parts of Turkie' is in itself sufficient proof that the cargoes then being shipped were not traded on a joint stock. Exactly when or why the change from a joint stock to a regulated basis took place it is impossible to say. It obviously

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Scott, ii, pp. 84-5; Lipson, ii, pp. 338-9.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 2. Barton to the Ld. Treasurer, Dec. 26, 1590; same to same, Feb. 16, 1590/1.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, pp. 83, 170. Harborne strongly supported a joint stock. See his Memo. 1591 (*Trans. of the R. Hist. S.*, 4th series, v, pp. 25-7).

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 143, 171-2, 178, 186, 196, 198.

occurred between 1588 and 1595, and was probably the outcome of the experience of the early years of the trade, for the fact that, once adopted, the regulated system was never abandoned would seem to prove that it suited better the circumstances of the trade and the individualism of the merchants.<sup>1</sup>

From the rather scanty evidence which has survived it seems clear that the new Company prospered. The Spanish war may have hindered its trade in the Mediterranean for a time. Hakluyt tells how a Turkey fleet of ten ships was set upon by the Spanish Galleys in 1590, and as a result the privy council advised all vessels from the Levant to collect and sail in convoy for their mutual protection;<sup>2</sup> but the trade appears never to have been interrupted. In 1592 three ships were waiting to sail, seven had come in from the Levant and four more were expected; the following year we hear of seven vessels due to arrive from Venice; and Sanderson and the Venetian bailos at Constantinople throughout the last decade of the century repeatedly note the appearance of English ships laden with rich cargoes. In 1595 the Company employed fifteen ships, which required 790 sailors;<sup>3</sup> and it paid in customs duties £5,500. Five of its vessels laded at Scanderoon in that year, two at Cyprus, two at Chios and one each at Venice and Algiers.<sup>4</sup> Four years later it had nearly twenty ships in Italian waters alone, and in 1600 it freighted sixteen vessels in addition to those which it owned.<sup>5</sup> By then the members of the Company had risen to 87

<sup>1</sup> None of the proofs advanced in favour of the continuance of a joint-stock organization shakes Sanderson's evidence to the contrary. The references in *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, pp. 83, 170, are mere statements of opinion in favour of a joint stock before the issue of the new charter of 1592. The mention of a joint stock in the debates in the house of commons in 1604 (*Journals*, i, p. 220) which Scott quotes was a general statement of the beneficial effects of its abolition without reference to any date and might easily refer to a period 10-15 years earlier. In the passage in *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 414 (referred to by Lipson, ii, p. 339), the writer was clearly thinking of the first company 1581-8. Nor do the letters in Stevens (pp. 272-6) quoted by Scott (ii, p. 85) prove the continuance of a joint stock. The order to stop the 'privie traffique' of the factors was in accordance with the policy which the Company pursued long after it had become a regulated one, while the instructions to its agent to confiscate all goods laden on ships which were not mentioned in the accompanying invoices was merely to prevent it from being defrauded of its duties. Members had to register their cargoes and pay impositions or duties on them for the upkeep of the Company and invoices were sent out to Turkey to enable the consuls to check the goods when they were landed and so prevent the smuggling of additional articles on which the appropriate fees had not been paid.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1591, pp. 136, 159.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1595-7, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> *S.P.* 97, 3, ff. 82-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1598-1601, p. 516; Cheyney, i, p. 402.

freemen who had 189 servants in their employment.<sup>1</sup> The remuneration of the second ambassador, Edward Barton (1588-97), also seems to prove that the Company's financial position was stronger than it had been in Harborne's time, for he was paid 3,000 Venetian chequins per annum, the equivalent of about £1,500; an opulent salary for those times.<sup>2</sup>

The most lucrative branch of the Company's trade was the import of currants from Venice and her dependencies, Zante and Cephalonia, for the popularity of these 'trash' berries, as Sir Thomas Roe called them, was already firmly established in England. Two thousand three hundred tons of currants were said to be imported annually at this time,<sup>3</sup> and to yield a profit to the Company of £11,500.<sup>4</sup> Large quantities of indigo were also imported; while it was claimed that cloth of all kinds to the annual value of £150,000 was carried out from England to Turkey.<sup>5</sup> At Aleppo, which had quickly superseded Tripoli as the chief centre of business in Syria,<sup>6</sup> there were frequent complaints about bad trade. In 1596 Staper wrote 'our charges be so great and our sales so bad at Aleppo that most men be weary of the trade', and another member of the Company, Nicholas Salter, declared 'our Aleppo trade is such as is not worth the venture'; but this sort of statement was too common throughout the whole history of the Company to carry much conviction. It is possible to set against them the fact that the Aleppo factory was a considerable one, numbering at least fourteen besides the consul, and that in 1597 the Company decided to erect a stone warehouse at Scanderoon, the port of Aleppo, which it would hardly have done if trade had been so slack. Even more convincing is the fact that the hard-headed John Sanderson was ordering his agent in London in 1599 to risk all the money of his which he held in the next shipping adventure for Syria.<sup>7</sup> Moreover the protests which were raised against the

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, ix, pp. 103-4, x, pp. 214-17.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, pp. 144, 159. Down to 1592 he was supposed to have 4 per cent. consular duty on all goods passing through the factories in Turkey, but he complained bitterly to Burghley that the factors would not pay it to him and that he was kept in a state of abject poverty. In 1592 he was promised 3,000 chequins p.a., but up to May 1593 no order was given to that effect. See Barton's letters to Burghley in S.P. 97. 2, also Wm. Aldrich to Burghley, May 13, 1593 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Epstein, p. 41, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, ii, p. 87; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 4, f. 214.

<sup>6</sup> As early as 1586 the Company was writing to the Aleppo factory as though it was then the chief factory in that area (Sanderson, p. 130).

<sup>7</sup> Sanderson, pp. 151, 160, 167, 178, 184.



Company's monopoly by envious rivals at home help to show that the trade was a lucrative one.

Yet there were formidable obstacles to be encountered. All ships had to sail heavily armed, and not all were successful in running the gauntlet of the watching Spaniards or in vanquishing their assailants. Insurance was a heavy item,<sup>1</sup> and big losses were sometimes suffered.<sup>2</sup> Strained relations with the Italian states, which reacted adversely upon the Company's trade, were repeatedly produced by the activities of the English warships in the Mediterranean. They interfered with neutral Italian vessels on the ground that they were carrying contraband or Spanish goods—sometimes even in piratical fashion with no excuse at all—and the result was constant friction with Venice, while Tuscany, stung to reprisals in 1598, forbade any English trade within its borders. The merchants complained of the 'outrages, rapines and robberies' of the English men-of-war both to the privy council and to the lord admiral, but not until peace was signed with Spain in 1604 did these abuses stop.<sup>3</sup>

Farther east the depredations of English privateers, many of them outlaws of the seas who preyed indiscriminately upon the shipping of all nations, brought the English in Turkey into bad odour, and threatened the maintenance of good relations between the two countries. Vessels and goods belonging to Turkish subjects were repeatedly seized, sometimes even in the very harbours where they lay, and the wretched inhabitants of the islands in the Archipelago were plundered for provisions. The English consuls were suspected of giving these gentry secret support, the Porte was besieged with complaints that the English 'robbe, spoile and kill Mussellmen',<sup>4</sup> and, as we have already seen, one Turkish official told Harborne to his face that his countrymen were common pirates. The letters of the Venetian bailo at Constantinople, though tainted with the prejudice of a defeated rival, illustrate the impression made by the conduct of some of the English vessels in the Levant. It was, he wrote, impossible to distinguish English ships which were used for trading only, for all were armed and the decks kept clear for artillery.

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Thus in 1601 the Spaniards captured a vessel worth £40,000 (Cheyney, i, p. 400).

<sup>3</sup> Stevens, *The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies*, pp. 277, 282, 283; Sanderson, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 203, 211.

'This accursed race (i.e. the English) has grown so bold that it goes everywhere without hesitation using barbarous cruelty, sinking ships, and carrying the booty into Patras and other ports where they find those who give them shelter. These scoundrels commit abominable excesses, and what is more are becoming most thoroughly acquainted with these waters where they freely navigate without fear of meeting any opposition.'<sup>1</sup>

The Company's ships were not the guilty parties, though no doubt occasionally the captain of a merchantman heavily armed for the purpose of defence could not resist the temptation *d faire le diable* in waters where rich plunder was to be gained and right normally rested with the strongest. The corsairs were the scum of that prolific ferment aroused in England by the first stirrings of maritime enterprise, and by the war—half crusade and half buccaneering—against Spain, and in Turkey their activities threw a heavy burden upon the Levant merchants who lived in constant fear of reprisals at the expense of their persons and property.

Another heavy liability was the cost of supporting the embassy at Constantinople. In 1588 when Harborne returned home some of the merchants, discouraged by the 'great charge' of maintaining their agent, had suggested abolishing the office, and even ending the trade;<sup>2</sup> but Barton's tenure of the position proved much more expensive owing to his diplomatic activities in trying to mediate peace between the emperor and the Turks.<sup>3</sup> In particular the command from the sultan that Barton should accompany him upon the campaign of 1596 threw a great deal of unavoidable expenditure upon the ambassador. Both he and the Company applied to the queen for the payment of these extraordinary expenses, involved by negotiations which did not concern the merchants and their trade, but although it was by Elizabeth's command that Barton had offered his mediation she seems to have left the Company to foot the bill.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1592-1603*, pp. 412-13, 433; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, pp. 128-32. Henry IV of France wrote to his ambassador in England in 1602 that French losses at the hands of English corsairs amounted to more than 1,200,000-1,500,000 écus (Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant au 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. xxiv).

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Between whom war had broken out in 1593.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, iv, p. 578, vi, p. 385. Barton's successor Lello stated that Barton died £4,000 in debt to the Company which would be for the money he had raised from the factory at Constantinople to pay his expenses (Sanderson, p. 194, note 2). The only money advanced by the government of which I have

The death of Sultan Murad III in 1595 brought new expense to the Company, for it was necessary to secure from his successor, Mohammed III, a renewal of the capitulations, and both custom and policy required that the new sultan should be saluted with letters of congratulation and rich presents. For the former the merchants applied to the queen and with Burghley's help suitable missives were draughted; but the latter had to be paid for by the Company, for with her customary parsimony Elizabeth refused to provide the gifts, although the grand signior, who would have scorned to receive them from a mere company of merchants, was led to believe that they came from the queen.<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, until 1599 that the ship conveying the letters and presents arrived at Constantinople. Whether their tardy dispatch was due to the financial embarrassments of the Company or to the fear that such a gift to the sultan might be interpreted as the payment of a tribute, or at least used by the queen's enemies as proof of her trafficking with the infidel against Christendom, is not clear; but the long delay does not seem to have aroused the ill will of the Turks against the English merchants.

Barton had died in Constantinople in December 1597 and it was his successor, Henry Lello, who presented the gifts and royal greeting. With them he coupled a request for the renewal of the capitulations and for the addition to them of seventeen new articles.<sup>2</sup> Fifteen of these dealt with minor points of trade, justice and the protection of the English factors not fully covered by the earlier grant, and were designed to fill up the gaps in the original capitulations. The fourteenth article reduced the customs duties for all English trading throughout the Turkish dominions to 3 per cent. The meaning of this is complicated by the clear statement of Harborne that he had already secured this reduction during his embassy.<sup>3</sup> Either, therefore, Lello was seeking for the formal recognition within the capitulations of a right already granted informally, or else he was trying to make general a concession hitherto limited. Some remarks of Sanderson suggest that the 3 per cent. rate was at first confined to goods actually carried out

found any mention was £600 granted to Barton in 1594 'for the Queen's special service' in Constantinople (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, p. 556).

<sup>1</sup> Rosedale. *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Co.* is devoted to the problem of these gifts; Rowland, pp. 144-7. (The present consisted of a mechanical organ, some silver ornaments, cloth and a gilded coach for the sultana.)

<sup>2</sup> They are printed in Sanderson, pp. 282-7.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, xiii, p. 444.

on English ships and that commodities otherwise handled by the merchants, as, for example, in the port-to-port trade in the Levant, paid more.<sup>1</sup>

Lello's twelfth demand covered a point which had long produced friction with the French ambassador, and it introduces to us new arrivals in the Levant who were soon to become serious competitors to the English. Down to their revolt against Philip II the Dutch, if they traded with Turkey at all, must have done so under the French flag in accordance with the capitulations granted to France in 1535, which placed all foreigners but the Venetians under her protection. But the repudiation of Spanish rule and the assistance given to them by Elizabeth linked them closely to England. When, therefore, they began to appear in the Levant in the fifteen-nineties their position was a disputable one, for if it was a travesty of the facts to regard them as subjects of Spain, it was equally true that their independence had not yet been recognized, and their ties with England were sufficiently strong to justify the claim of something like a protectorate over them. The problem of their status appears to have been first raised in 1595 when English protection was asked for two ships of Amsterdam freighted for Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> The first instinct of the Levant merchants was to oppose this intervention lest it should damage their own trade; and in a petition to the privy council praying for the suppression of the Dutch effort to force an entry into Turkey the Company did not conceal its fear of the superiority of the Hollanders, both as seamen and traders. But it soon accepted the advice of Sanderson, that since it was impossible to stop the Dutch from trading it was better to welcome them under English protection, and orders were sent out 'to entertaine them kindlie'.

At Constantinople the 'protection' of the new arrivals gave rise to a long conflict between Barton and Lello and the French ambassador, the *Sieur de Brèves*, which was in part a matter of

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, pp. 190-1. Answer by J. S. to queries by James Altham, Jan. 12, 1600? 'I also paid custom for cloth and other commodities 5 per cento untill I made agreement with the customers for all goods that should come after that time consigned to Englishmen to pay but 4 per cento. For such as our English shippinge brought they never made question it ought (i.e. owed) but 3 and paid no more.' It is clear from Fynes Moryson (*Shakespeare's Europe*, p. 17) that in 1596 the English in Aleppo were only paying 3 per cent.

<sup>2</sup> The first mention of the Dutch which I have found was in 1589. Barton writing on Oct. 4, 1589 (S.P. 97. 1), to 'Rt. Honble' (Burghley or Walsingham) reported: 'Lately some Hollanders have arrived under colour of being travellers to get orders and safe conducts to traffic in Turkey.'

prestige and in part a financial question. For the English ambassadors claimed that the Dutch were under the protection of their mistress and should therefore sail under the English flag, while de Brèves asserted that, like all other foreigners but the English and the Venetians, they were under his jurisdiction; and the desire of both to secure the 'consulage' or duty which the Hollanders would pay in return for their protection lent force to the dispute. Normally the Levant Company exacted a payment or 'consulage' of 2 per cent. in Turkey on all imports and exports by its members in order to defray its expenses—and it was estimated in 1599 that if the Dutch 'consulage' could also be secured it would by itself nearly pay for the upkeep of the ambassador and consuls. Lello had therefore included in the proposed additional articles to the capitulations a demand that the Dutch should be recognized as sailing under the English flag.<sup>1</sup> All his requests were readily granted, except this one; and even here, though the sultan would not put it in the capitulations, a strong order was issued placing the Dutch under the banner of England.

But de Brèves had the longer purse, and 6,000 chequins, judiciously distributed, secured the cancelling of all that had been promised to his opponent. Lello sent his secretary, Paul Pindar, home to report on the situation, only to find that the French had forestalled him. Their ambassador in London had already complained of his conduct over the Dutch consulage and Sir Robert Cecil, the secretary of state, sent to the Company and ordered it to instruct the ambassador to drop his contention and leave the Dutch to decide for themselves under which flag they would sail. This, he subsequently explained, was only to be done provided that de Brèves was also ordered to desist from trying to force the new-comers under his protection. If he persisted Lello also was left free to take any lawful means to secure the consulage of the Hollanders for his own nation. As de Brèves showed no signs of giving up his claim the struggle continued, and by 1601—with the aid of the capitan pasha—Lello won his point. In April or early May of that year the capitulations with all the additional articles, including the one which decreed that the Dutch were to sail under the English flag, were ratified by the sultan.<sup>2</sup> Six years later Lello's successor, Sir Thomas Glover, rekindled the ani-

<sup>1</sup> Rowland, pp. 138, 154-5; Cheyney, i, p. 398; Sanderson, pp. 166, 183, 185, 188, 193; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1595-7, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, pp. xxv-xxvi; Rowland, pp. 154-67; Stevens, pp. 265-70.

mosity of the French by securing the renewal of the capitulations in terms which pleased not only the Dutch, but all other Europeans except the French, and Venetians under English protection, but he eventually received orders from Lord Salisbury to relinquish this new pretension, and in 1609 he agreed with his French colleague that England should henceforth claim jurisdiction over none but the Dutch.<sup>1</sup>

Successful though it was in the end this long squabble must have cost the Company a considerable amount, for Lello, though not so lavishly furnished as de Brèves, had also to apply the golden unction to the expectant palms of the Turkish officials whose main interest in the dispute between the Giaours was that of the corrupt broker; and if Dutch consulage was enjoyed for a season a formidable rival was established in the Levant as the future was to show. In another sphere also Dutch activities at this time foreshadowed a menace which was to fall upon the Turkey merchants in later days, though when it matured it came from the hands, not of the Hollanders, but of their own countrymen. During the closing decade of the century efforts were made both from England and from the Netherlands to round the Cape of Good Hope and break into the Portuguese monopoly of the eastern trade. Two English expeditions under James Lancaster (1591-4) and Benjamin Wood (1596) reached the East Indies, but it was the Dutch who first revealed the possibilities of the new trade route and established a firm footing in the orient. After the preliminary expedition of Cornelius Houtman (1595-7), which was pushed as far as Sumatra, a large squadron of twenty-two ships was dispatched in 1598, and in July 1599 four of these ships returned laden with spices and pepper and cloves. The alarm promptly spread among the members of the English Levant Company that their trade through Aleppo, which was the entrepôt for eastern goods brought overland by the caravan routes from the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, was in danger of being diverted at its source, for it was at once realized that spices purchased in the east and brought to Europe by the all-sea route would easily undersell similar commodities acquired through the Levant factories where they had to bear the heavy transport expenses of a long desert journey and the profits of several Arab, Armenian, or Greek middle-men through whose hands they passed before

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 5, ff. 113-17; Sanderson, p. 238, note 1; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, pp. 68-91.

reaching their English purchasers. Even as early as December 1599 the factors at Aleppo fought shy of purchasing spices there for fear of this new Dutch competition, which, it was anticipated, would entirely ruin the trade in spices through Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The Levant Company, perhaps to soothe the alarm at Aleppo, professed to be incredulous about the menace 'for ther are manie impediments that may hinder ther voiages of soe longe and great courses and great adventures and may move the dutche mrchaunts rather to frequent a knowen and peaceable trade in Turkey than hassard the daunger of seas and enemyes of soe longe a circuite and infestious clymates'.<sup>2</sup> But these reasonings did not prevent the leading merchants of the Company from planning to send out an expedition to the Indies themselves in the autumn of 1599, and although this was stopped for the time being by Queen Elizabeth on political grounds all the most prominent members of the Turkey trade were original subscribers to the East India Company when it was established in the following year.<sup>3</sup> The new Company was, in fact, in its early days a kind of off-shoot or out-growth from the older one. Its first governor Thomas Smith was also governor of the Levant Company; at least 31 of its original members (out of a total of 218) were Turkey merchants; and it has even been suggested that the two Companies used the same books at first.<sup>4</sup> In thus promoting the development of the ocean route to the east the members of the Levant Company were no doubt augmenting their individual fortunes, but, as the future proved, they were striking a telling blow at the well-being of their original Company. For the alarm expressed at Aleppo in 1599 was not wholly groundless,

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, pp. 180, 189, 212.

<sup>2</sup> Stevens, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Fifty-seven people attended a meeting of subscribers to the new Company in Sept. 1599 and at least one-third of them were connected with the Levant Company. Of the committee of fifteen 'Directours' then appointed seven were members of the Levant Company (Sir Wm. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, p. 146).

<sup>4</sup> Stevens, p. vii. The link became even closer later. Sixty-four names in the Levant Company's charter of 1605 appear also in the second East India Company's charter of 1609. Throughout the seventeenth century the connexion remained. Sir Hugh Hammersley, the governor of the Levant Company, was sufficiently prominent in the East India Company to be proposed as governor in 1636. In 1639 William Cockayne, deputy governor of the Levant Company, was also chosen deputy governor of the East India Company. Sir Henry Carraway, another of the Levant Company's governors, was elected governor of the East India Company in 1641. Sir Andrew Riccard held both offices in the reign of Charles II, and George, Lord Berkeley, head of the Levant Company 1672-95, was for many years prominent in the East India Company. See *Court Minutes of the East India Company*, *passim*.

and the subsequent development of the East India trade—though by the new English Company rather than by the Dutch—did drain away some of the traffic in oriental goods which the Levant factories had hitherto enjoyed.

It is from these same years at the close of Elizabeth's reign that there dates the first faint beginnings of a dispute with France which loomed large three centuries later, and which forms an interesting chapter in our imperial history. Egypt was one of the great funnels through which the products of the orient reached Europe. Thither there still came the silks, spices, dyes, and drugs of the east and the coffee of Arabia, all brought up the Red Sea by Arab traders and conveyed across the desert to Cairo and Alexandria. To tap this rich stream of traffic the Venetians had established a consul at Alexandria as early as 1346, and the French secured a firm foothold in Egypt between 1536 and 1570.<sup>1</sup> One of Harborne's earliest actions had been to try to gain entrance for his countrymen by the appointment of Harvey Millers as consul there in 1583, and there is plenty of evidence during the next few years that the Levant merchants made a determined effort to participate in the trade of Egypt. As early as 1583 ships were being sent to Alexandria to exchange tin, lead, and kerseys for drugs and spices.<sup>2</sup> Hakluyt's detailed notes upon the trade of that port, made about the same time, also serve to show the interest that was being taken in England in the trade.<sup>3</sup> Three years later (1586) John Sanderson and another factor of the Levant Company (William Shales?) were sent from Constantinople to Egypt to investigate the conditions and possibilities of trade, and in their report they held out good hopes of disposing profitably of tin, kerseys, cloths, and coniskins.<sup>4</sup> English ships are mentioned at Alexandria in 1586 and 1587;<sup>5</sup> pepper was being bought in Cairo by English factors;<sup>6</sup> Aldersey found some of his countrymen living there;<sup>7</sup> and in 1601 Staper himself dispatched a vessel of his own to Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

But various circumstances proved adverse to this attempt to trade. The cost of living was very high in Egypt; in spite of the capitula-

<sup>1</sup> Pouqueville, pp. 545-6, 554.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Spanish, 1580-6*, p. 433. An English ship from Alexandria laden with spices to the value of 40,000 crowns was taken by certain Ragusans in 1587 (*H.M.C. Salisbury*, iii, p. 279).

<sup>3</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 272-4.

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 131-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1581-91*, p. 204; *H.M.C. Salisbury*, iii, p. 279.

<sup>6</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, iv, p. 452.

<sup>7</sup> Hakluyt, vi, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Sanderson, p. 214.



tions customs duties of 10 per cent. were still charged at Alexandria; and owing to the close knowledge which the Egyptians obtained in advance from Mecca of the quality, quantity, and prices of the oriental goods on their way to Cairo the market was apt to be a tricky one to deal in. It was necessary also for ships to remain at Alexandria sometimes for months if they were to be laded profitably, for on the arrival of European vessels the price of spices promptly went up, and the rise had to be outlived before cargoes could be purchased advantageously.<sup>1</sup> Experience further proved that there was only a small outlet for England's chief article of export—woollen cloth—in such a warm climate. Sandys, who visited Egypt in 1610, wrote that 'the English have so ill utterance for their warm clothes in these hot countries that I believe they will rather suffer their ships to rot in the river than continue that trade any longer'.<sup>2</sup> Consequently supplies of ready money were needed to trade in Egypt, and that was a method of exchange which ran counter to the bullionist theories of the time.

An even more potent obstacle was the opposition of rival traders. The Venetians were not, in their declining state, serious competitors, but the French made a vigorous resistance to the entrance of the English. What happened to Harvey Millers we do not know, but he had vanished by 1585 when a Venetian, Paulo Mariani, was serving as English consul in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> He had formerly been vice-consul for the French under their consul, Christofero Vento, but being annoyed because he did not get the reversion of the consulate he transferred his allegiance to the new-comers.<sup>4</sup> Personal feeling thus lent venom to the resistance which, on wider grounds, the French opposed to the establishment of an English consulate, for before Millers's appointment English merchants trading in Egypt had been obliged to resort to the French consul for protection and pay dues to him.<sup>5</sup> Vento now persisted in claiming that the English were still under his jurisdiction in spite of their capitulations and, apparently with the connivance of the Turkish authorities, he 'did by all means molest and trouble them' until in the spring of 1586 Mariani 'oppressed with many injuries' fled away to Constantinople.<sup>6</sup> Here he was accused by the French ambassador of having spoken in a hostile manner of the King of France, and was actually

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, pp. 131-6.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, *Travels*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Sanderson, pp. 227-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129, note 4; *Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1581-91*, p. 158; Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> siècle*, xviii, note i.

<sup>5</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 272-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, v, pp. 287-9; *Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1581-91*, pp. 158-9.

arrested on his instigation, but Harborne secured his release. For the next few years he remained at Constantinople, where he became very intimate with Edward Barton,<sup>1</sup> and as no successor was appointed to his office the English in Egypt once more passed under the wing of France.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later (in 1596) Mariani appeared upon the stage once more. If Sanderson can be believed he was an inveterate intriguer and at length succeeded in smoothing the animosity of the French and in being appointed consul for France in Egypt; but he had not removed the ill will of the French ambassador, and once he was back in Cairo, de Brèves

'wrought means for commandment from the vizier and cadie to hange up Signor Paulo; which was effected, and he hanged by the necke in his redd velvett gowne under the chieffeste gate of Cairo; beinge privatly by force fetched out of his house in the eveninge, for otherwise his death had bine prevented, he had so besotted and was so beloved of most in the citie. Paulo his witt was a maker of patriarks and princes, a setter up and puller downe of them and ambassadors, a poysoner and filthy liver, a warre and peace maker, a garboyler' [maker of tumults].<sup>3</sup>

For four more years the English in Egypt remained under the French consul who treated them 'with all kindness',<sup>4</sup> but in 1600 Lello appointed Benjamin Bishop as consul. The English in Cairo protested against this, not only because it would breed new dissensions with the French, but also because their trade was not sufficiently large to support the expenses of a separate consulate. Lello persisted, but when Bishop appeared in Egypt his countrymen refused to recognize him; and on personal grounds the choice does not seem to have been a happy one, for the new consul is described 'as badd a fellowe as bad may be', who had swindled his creditors in England and had sunk to the level of selling penny drams of spirits to erring Turks. That there was something in the charges against him seems proved by the fact that he was dismissed in 1601;

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson (p. 13) calls him one of Barton's secretaries in 1592. Elsewhere (*Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1592-1603*, p. 59) he is spoken of as one of Barton's 'chief councillors'.

<sup>2</sup> It is clear from the account of Laurence Aldersey (Hakluyt, vi, p. 43) that there was then (1586) no English consul at Alexandria or Cairo, though he found two English merchants in the latter city.

<sup>3</sup> Sanderson, p. 13. Mariani was accused of supplying the Spaniards with information, but he does not seem to have been given any trial (*Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1592-1603*, pp. 247-8).

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 209-10. The English paid no dues to the French consul (*ibid.*, p. 205, note 2).

whereupon he turned Mohammedan, and so vanishes from view.<sup>1</sup> English ships still went to Alexandria and an odd merchant or two was always to be found in Cairo, but the trade done was small, and it was once more carried on under the protection of the French consul.<sup>2</sup> England's first venture into the land of the Pharaohs was thus neither a very triumphant one, nor, so far as her official representatives went, a very creditable one, and all the honours of the opening contest for supremacy there rested with the French.

Before the Company had enjoyed its new charter for nine years it fell foul of the government and lost it. The Venice Company had claimed and exercised the right which Acerbo Velutelli had formerly possessed of levying an imposition upon all currants, wine, and oil imported into England by those who were not members; and after 1592 the new united Company continued to exercise the same prerogative, demanding 5s. 6d. on every hundredweight of currants brought into the country by non-freemen, although by the terms of the charter no such power was explicitly conveyed to it. The wording, which prohibited any one from importing currants 'unless it be by and with the license, consent, and agreement' of the Levant Company, might, however, be interpreted to give an implied sanction to the levying of a regular charge for such consent and agreement; and until 1600 the Company drew a revenue from this source which became sufficiently large to cover most of the expenses of maintaining its agents in Turkey. The duty was paid by native Venetian merchants and by English traders who were not free of the Company, and it provoked several protests from those whose business was thus hampered and penalized; while on wider grounds it was disliked because it seemed to increase the price of the popular fruit for the benefit of a few monopolists.

In 1600 Richard Carmarthen, the London customs house surveyor, drew the queen's attention to the imposition and suggested that its collection was an infringement of her prerogative of taxation for which the Company's charter provided no foundation. With growing expenses and a depleted treasury as a result of the Spanish war and the Irish rebellion Elizabeth was not likely to let

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, pp. 56, note 4; 205, note 2; 209, 211; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1592-1603, p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, who was in Egypt in 1610, stayed in the house of the French consul at Alexandria 'unto whose protection all strangers committ themselves', but at Cairo he was entertained by an English merchant. Lithgow in 1612 lived with the Venetian consul, and had to resort to the French consul for redress against the exactions of the Venetians (*Travels and Voyages*, pp. 244-5).

slip the opportunity of diverting a profitable tax into her own coffers; and she was encouraged to interfere by the offers of a rival group of merchants to pay her 5s. 6d. per cwt. of currants, 6 ducats on every hogshead of wine, and 5s. on all barrels of oil imported in return for a grant to them of the monopoly of the Levant trade. It was accordingly decided to collect these impositions for the crown in future, and when some of the Company's ships arrived in the Thames in May 1600 laden with currants and wine the merchants were required to pay the new imposts before unloading their cargoes. They petitioned against this on the ground that it contravened their privileges; whereupon, in June, they were summoned before the council and notice was given them of the cancellation of their charter. A month later they begged for its renewal, offering in return to contribute £4,000 per annum to the exchequer, which was the amount the impositions were estimated to produce for the queen. The offer, which was in itself sufficient proof of the profitable nature of the trade, met the requirements of the government by giving it, even though in a roundabout way, a share in the proceeds of the currant monopoly, and in August a renewal of the charter was promised.<sup>1</sup>

This new charter was issued on December 31, 1600, and was for the most part identical with that of 1592 save for the clause which in euphemistic phraseology embodied the new condition upon which the grant was made. The Levant merchants 'calling to mind like dutiful and loving subjects what excessive charges and expenses we do daily sustain for the defence of our kingdom and subjects have for the manifestation of their grateful minds and loyal affections towards us' offered to pay £4,000 per annum in return for a new incorporation; and the letters patent were to be void if this annual rent or farm or any part of it was not forthcoming within forty days of the time appointed for payment. The charter, which was to last for fifteen years, contained eighty-three names, and, as in 1592, the governor for the first year and the twelve assistants were nominated in it.<sup>2</sup>

Considerable vagueness hangs over the next few years of the Company's history. For two years the £4,000 was paid, and the merchants recouped themselves by levying 10s. a cwt. on currants and smaller sums on wine and oil brought in by those who were not members of the Company. But when Elizabeth died in 1603

<sup>1</sup> Cheyney, i, pp. 404-5; Rowland, pp. 172-4; Epstein, pp. 42-6; Stevens, p. 280; *H.M.C. Salisbury*, xi, pp. 578-81; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1598-1601, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> The charter is in Carr, *Select Charters of Trading Companies*, pp. 30-43.

£2,000 were owing to the crown and the merchants promptly 'renounced their patent and dissolved the Company, alleging that they were unable to pay the £4,000 a year and could only meet the charges of the ambassador'.<sup>1</sup> Their motives for acting in this way are far from clear. They may have found the annual payment to the crown more than they could bear, but if that was so, it is strange that they did not petition for a reduction without resorting at once to the drastic measure of forfeiting their charter.

The evidence for the state of their trade at the time is conflicting. There were difficulties in Constantinople where the Turks, hearing that the new English king was planning to make peace with Spain, treated Lello badly and even threatened not to recognize the capitulations now that Elizabeth was dead; and the Venetian bailo there wrote to the doge and senate of losses which had enfeebled the English merchants and of their reduced trade. If his colleague in London can be believed, the opening of direct trade with the east by the English and Dutch East India Companies had already told heavily against the Levant merchants, for silks and spices could be brought from the Indies by sea one-third cheaper than it cost to ship them from Turkey, and the warehouses of England and Holland were bulging with such goods. He reported also that the interests of many of the Levant traders had been diverted to the more profitable traffic with the east and that the capital annually engaged in the Turkey trade had shrunk from 220,000–250,000 crowns (£55,000–£60,000 odd) to 30,000–40,000 crowns within the last few years.<sup>2</sup> This reduced capital was no longer able to bear the heavy expenses incurred in the Levant by keeping up the ambassador and consuls, and some of the merchants wished to wind up the Company and abandon the trade.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand we hear of a single ship arriving in London from Syria in 1603 with a cargo estimated to be worth 300,000 ducats (£75,000); these same Venetian agents were constantly lamenting that the English were becoming 'absolute masters' in the Levant and ruining the trade of the Republic there; and one of them told his government in 1607 that some of the English Turkey merchants had amassed fortunes ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 crowns.<sup>4</sup> It is striking too that Sanderson's correspondence contains no laments on the circumstances of the trade at the time

<sup>1</sup> It was forfeited by July 1603 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603–7, pp. 64, 132).

<sup>2</sup> The crown = 5s. <sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603–7, pp. 113, 125, 318, 237.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1592–1603, pp. 534, 536; 1603–7, p. 504.

and that when the charter was forfeited no effort was made to recall the Company's agents and capital from Turkey. Indeed the visible reluctance of the Company to lose its privileges, and the shoal of rivals anxious to participate in the trade, show plainly that the cry of distress was an exaggerated if not a wholly sham one. Most probably the forfeiture and plea of poverty was a 'try-on' in the hope of forcing more favourable conditions from a sovereign who had not Elizabeth's flair for a hard bargain and might be expected to be anxious to win golden opinions among the influential merchant community of his new realm.

When, however, King James ignored their plea and threatened to levy the impositions on currants and wine on his own account in order to recoup himself for the £4,000 per annum which had been lost,<sup>1</sup> the merchants decided to petition for a renewal of their monopoly on the same terms as before. To this, their rivals, who wanted the trade left open or the privilege widened, offered strong opposition. A committee of six was named by the privy council to consider the question, and by March 1604 it had reported in favour of continuing the Company on condition that admission to it should henceforth be obtainable by all who paid an entrance fee of 200 ducats. Over this qualification a controversy at once broke out which postponed the issue of the new charter. Those who stood outside the Company, but wished to enter it, protested that the admission fee was unjust and that they were being penalized to benefit the old members. The latter proposed to appropriate the proceeds of the fee to extinguish the Company's debts;<sup>2</sup> but the others promptly rejoined that these should be met by the profits made in the past and not out of the pockets of the new-comers. This wrangle brought negotiations to a standstill; and the bill which was introduced into the commons in the summer to dissolve all the monopolistic companies damped down for the time being any new efforts to achieve a settlement.<sup>3</sup>

In the autumn the king, who was short of money, determined for the first time to enforce the impositions which he had already

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated at £8,000 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 228).

<sup>3</sup> But no attack was made on the Levant Company during this agitation. Its regulated organization was, in fact, held up as a model against the joint stock of the Muscovy Company. This 'strong and shamefu lmonopoly', it was asserted, was causing trade to decline to the benefit of the Dutch. 'The like fell out in the Turkey Company when they constrained men to a joint stock; since the breaking of which combination there go four ships for one' (*Journals of the H. of Commons*, i, pp. 218-21).

threatened to collect;<sup>1</sup> and when the merchants protested that they could not keep up the ambassador and consuls in Turkey if they were called upon to pay this additional duty, James roundly told them that it was of no consequence to him that an ambassador should reside at Constantinople as he had no wish for friendly relations with the Turks and that if the Company found an ambassador necessary for its own interests it must pay for him. This rebuff produced 'an uproar and commotion' among the merchants, which was sharpened when the impositions were farmed out to the lord chamberlain, the Earl of Suffolk, for 22,000 crowns per annum (£5,500, or £1,500 more than the Company had agreed to pay in 1600). Again there were threats to abandon the trade, but more prudent—and presumably more profitable—counsels prevailed, and in February 1605 the merchants offered to pay the same amount as Suffolk in return for a renewal of their patent. For a time the chamberlain and his friends were strong enough to secure the rejection of the offer, but by May the king was relenting. The long uncertainty was having disastrous effects upon the Levant trade; the ambassador had not been paid any salary for some time; and further reflection had convinced James that it was imperative to maintain an agent at the Porte. Accordingly the privy council sent for the Company and offered to restore its charter if it would undertake to pay to the crown the 22,000 crowns for which Suffolk was then farming the currant and wine impositions. It was now the turn of the merchants to blow cold and to express reluctance to resume their monopoly on the grounds of the heavy expenses attached to it; but the Earl of Salisbury continued quietly to collect information and advice; conferences were held between those merchants who wished to enter the Company and commissioners appointed by the crown; and by September agreement was reached to maintain the Company and enlarge its ranks. The vexed question of the impositions was settled by preserving the existing order: the crown continued to collect them and the Company was excused from the annual payment which had been demanded of it. On these terms the new charter was issued on December 14, 1605.<sup>2</sup>

The grant was a much longer and more detailed one than its predecessors and was without limitation of time, the privileges being

<sup>1</sup> At the same time the Company was excused from paying all the arrears due on the impositions, estimated at £6,000 (Gardiner, *Hist. of England*, 1603-42, ii, p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603-7, pp. 132-4, 146, 163-4, 168, 184, 192-3, 217, 225, 237, 276; Epstein, pp. 47-57; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 233.

given to the Company to enjoy 'for ever'. In the opening paragraphs a certain amount of 'window dressing' is visible, which is explained by the recent outcry against monopolies in parliament. It is declared to be the royal pleasure

'not to appropriate the said trade . . . to any limited number of merchants nor to any one city or place within these our realms and dominions, nor to suffer the same to be used or enjoyed in any degree of monopoly, but to lay open the same to all our loving subjects using only the trade of merchandise who are willing to enter into the same trade upon such reasonable terms and conditions as shall necessarily belong to the support of the same'.

The phraseology obviously put the most liberal construction upon the renewal of the monopoly, but there was a genuine intention to widen the ranks of the Company in the future.

Provision was therefore made for the recruiting of new members on reasonable terms. The sole right of trading with the dominions of Venice and the sultan was given by the charter to 119 men named in it; but, in addition, any English merchant who was over twenty-six years of age and who applied for admission before the next Feast of the Annunciation was to be admitted to the freedom of the Company on payment of a sum of £25. After the appointed date the entrance fee was raised to £50. Similarly in the future all those qualified to be merchants could claim admission on paying £25 provided that they applied within one year after the expiration of their apprenticeship or after the attainment of their twenty-sixth birthday. If these time limits were neglected the charge for becoming a freeman was raised to £50. Sons of freemen and apprentices who had lived in the Levant for three years were to be admitted as members on payment of 20s. only. Other apprentices who had not fulfilled the residence qualification might also be admitted by their masters for a similar sum, but no member could exercise this right more than once in every seven years. The money raised by these charges was in the first place to be utilized—up to a maximum of £8,000—to pay the debts incurred by the agents of the old Company during the interregnum of 1603–5; any surplus, and the future proceeds, were to go towards the annual expenses of the Company.

To the body thus formed full incorporation as a legal person with perpetual succession and a common seal was granted under the title of 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of England trading into the Levant Seas'; and its framework was carefully defined. It consisted of a governor, a deputy-governor, and eighteen



assistants, all to be elected annually at a general meeting of the freemen of the Company held in London within the first fortnight of February every year, save only that the first governor (Sir Thomas Lowe) and assistants were named in the charter. The deputy-governor and assistants were always to reside in London, but additional deputy governors might be appointed in other English ports where members of the Company lived, and these were to hold office at the pleasure of the general court of the Company. An oath was imposed on all these officials that they would 'duly and truly' execute the duties of their position according to the charter and regulations of the Company; and every freeman had also to swear on admission that he would obey the Company's by-laws.

To the general court, consisting of the governor or deputy-governor, the assistants and freemen, was given the right to appoint and remove consuls and vice-consuls at its discretion within the limits of the Company's monopoly, and full rights of jurisdiction over all English subjects trading therein were bestowed upon these agents. The general court was also to establish 'statutes, laws, orders, constitutions, and ordinances' for the good government of the Company and its trade, and it could punish by imprisonment or fine both interlopers and members who refused to pay its duties or to obey its regulations, provided always that the regulations and penalties were not repugnant to the laws and statutes of the realm or to any treaty to which England was a party. The charter closed with lengthy guarantees of assistance from all 'mayors, sheriffs, justices, bailiffs, constables, customers' and other civil officials in the maintenance of the Company's rights and privileges.<sup>1</sup> To give the new Company a prosperous start the king directed that the estimated proceeds for one year of the impositions on currants and wine (£5,322) should be given to the merchants to meet the cost of a new present for the sultan.<sup>2</sup> The conditions which were thus outlined for the future conduct of the Levant trade proved to be durable ones, and it was under the charter of 1605 (with some slight modifications after the Restoration and again in 1753) that the Company traded for the remainder of its existence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Charter is printed in full in Epstein, pp. 153-210.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 270; Gardiner, ii, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The settlement of 1605 did not finally close the question of the imposition upon currants. One of the Turkey merchants, John Bates, questioned the legal right of the crown to levy it in 1606 and so gave rise to the well-known *Bates's case* in which the arguments of the judges had such far-reaching constitutional implications. They decided in favour of the king and the imposition continued.

### III

#### PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY

IN spite of some difficulties and obstacles the trade with the Levant was a prosperous and an expanding one for the next forty years. Sir Thomas Roe estimated that by 1626 the Company was exporting goods to the value of £250,000 per annum to Turkey,<sup>1</sup> and imports were equally heavy. One vessel which arrived in 1617 was said to carry a cargo to the value of £180,000.<sup>2</sup> Many of the merchants amassed considerable fortunes. We know from his great benefactions and loans to King Charles and to the City of London that Sir Paul Pindar had built up a very large estate in the Levant, while others like Sir Hugh Hammersley, Sir Maurice Abbott, and Sir Henry Garraway, who all rose to be Lord Mayors of London,<sup>3</sup> must clearly have been men of substance.

Foremost among the articles exported was English cloth, the demand for which in the Levant, according to Thomas Mun,<sup>4</sup> had increased by one-third in the first twenty years of the century. By 1635 from 24,000 to 30,000 pieces were being sent out yearly, half of them to Constantinople, and half to Smyrna and Aleppo. It was mostly purple or crimson in colour, and that which went to the capital and was sold to the members of the sultan's court, or to the wealthy merchants who forwarded it by caravans (which left Broussa five or six times a year) to the Persian market, was of higher quality than that dispatched to the other factories.<sup>5</sup> Tin, lead, and furs were also sent out, and so too were East Indian products. The old trade in spices, dyes, and drugs through Aleppo had been curtailed by the development of the Cape route to the east,<sup>6</sup> which produced a drastic reduction in the national bill for these commodities. At Aleppo pepper cost 2s. per pound, whereas in the east the same

<sup>1</sup> The cargoes of two ships only bound for Turkey in 1637 were valued at £200,000 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1637-8, p. 103).

<sup>2</sup> Birch, *Court and Times of James I*, ii, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Hammersley in 1628, Abbott in 1638, Garraway in 1639. Hammersley and Garraway were governors of the Company.

<sup>4</sup> Mun, *A Discourse of Trade from England unto the West Indies*, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1632-6, pp. 461-2; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 432. In 1638 two ships took out 17,000 cloths to Constantinople (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, p. 466).

<sup>6</sup> English trade in Syria was said to be 'greatly sunk' in 1611 owing to this cause (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, p. 179).

quantity could be bought for  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , and the corresponding values for cloves were  $4s.$  and  $9d.$  The total import of spices by the East India Company, for which  $\pounds 511,458\ 5s.\ 8d.$  was paid, would, if purchased at Aleppo, have cost  $\pounds 1,456,001\ 10s.$ <sup>1</sup> Competition was difficult against such figures, but the big reduction gave rise to some compensation to the Levant merchants for the diminution of their Aleppo trade, because it made it possible to re-export these eastern goods from England and still sell them in Turkey at a profit. Thus the arrival of large cargoes belonging to the East India Company was followed by the prompt transshipment of a portion of them to the Levant.<sup>2</sup>

To the mercantilist opinion of the day this large export of English goods commended the Levant trade even more than that of the East India Company which from its earliest days had been criticized for draining bullion out of the country in order to pay for its imports. Lewis Roberts wrote of the Levant Company that in his day it had 'growne to that height that (without comparison) it is the most flourishing and beneficiall Company to the commonwealth of any in England of all other whatsoever';<sup>3</sup> and Mun's testimony is equally glowing: 'Of all Europe this nation drove the most profitable trade to Turkey by reason of the vast quantities of broad cloth, tin, &c., which we exported thither; enough to purchase all the wares we wanted in Turkey—whereas a balance in money is paid by the other nations trading thither.'<sup>4</sup> The maintenance of this favourable balance of trade was not always easy, for at Zante, in particular, where the English purchased each year about two-thirds of the currant crop at a cost of over  $\pounds 50,000$ , there was practically no market for English goods and payment had to be made in ready money. The difficulty was partly overcome with the money which outgoing vessels picked up at Lisbon, Cadiz, Malaga, and Alicante, by the sale of cloth, fish, sugar from the colonies and other articles, receiving in return the Spanish dollars or pieces of eight which were the chief medium of exchange in the Levant. At Lisbon, goods from Brazil were sometimes taken on board and carried to the Levant where they could be sold for a profit which often reached cent. per cent.<sup>5</sup> Partly also the problem was eased by the fact that sales at Constantinople were much heavier than purchases, consequently

<sup>1</sup> Khan, *The East India Trade, &c.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Mun, *Discourse, &c.*, pp. 32-3; *Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1613-15*, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Roberts, *Merchants' Mappe of Commerce*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>4</sup> Mun, *Discourse, &c.*, p. 19. See also Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 124; Hill, p. 86.

vessels could unload there, exchanging most of their cargoes for money and then procure new ladings at Zante or Aleppo to carry home.<sup>1</sup>

The two old rivals of England in the Levant market—Venice and France—were both outstripped during these years. Venetian supremacy had already been undermined by the French, but they fought a hard battle before they surrendered their lead. Like their rivals they exported cloth, and the superior quality and durability of their wares at first enabled them to keep command of the best markets;<sup>2</sup> but in time they were undersold and driven off the stage. The letters of their agents in the Levant early began to complain of the low price of the cloth sent out by the English and the consequent transfer of the trade into their hands. Those cloths called 'Londons' imitated the Venetian in colour and sold at a much cheaper rate, thus undercutting the Italians, and at the same time extending their own market by tempting a wider circle of customers. Wool was plentiful in England, transport was cheap, and it was impossible for the Venetians to manufacture and market similar cloth at a competitive price.<sup>3</sup> Added to this the merchants of the Republic, like those of France, were handicapped by being compelled to pay 2 per cent. more in customs duties in Turkey than the favoured islanders.<sup>4</sup> The long war with the Porte which began when Sultan Ibrahim I attacked the island of Crete in 1645 completed the downfall of Venetian trade, and in the second half of the century they finally dropped out of the race. Even as early as the sixteen-thirties they had taken second place to the English at Aleppo, and in Egypt their trade had almost vanished. By 1680 they were talking of closing down the Aleppo consulate, and at Smyrna in 1702 no Venetian merchants remained, although a consul still represented the Republic there.<sup>5</sup>

In trade, as in politics, the French had been the first of the western powers of Christendom to establish any relations with the Turks. Their first capitulations were secured in 1535, they settled in Constantinople as early as 1550, and ten years later their consulate at Aleppo was founded.<sup>6</sup> Neither the English nor the Dutch had yet

<sup>1</sup> *Roe Letters*, Roe to Calvert, Dec. 16/26, 1621; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, p. 125; Zinkeison, iv, pp. 308-10, 316; Fynes Moryson, *Itinerary*, pt. iii, bk. 3, p. 127; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1642-3, p. 163.   <sup>2</sup> Fynes Moryson, pt. iii, bk. 3, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1625-6, p. 554; 1626-8, p. 352; 1629-32, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> Five per cent. instead of 3 per cent. (Lewis Roberts, p. 119).

<sup>5</sup> Lewis Roberts, pp. 75, 139; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, pp. 379, 418.

<sup>6</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, *Introd.* p. xiv; Saint-Priest, p. 282.

arrived in the Levant and the Venetians were soon forced to yield their old supremacy in the Turkish market. The conquest of Portugal by Spain in 1580 also contributed to the success of the French merchants (and of the English when they appeared) for it reduced the trade formerly carried on with the East Indies via the Cape of Good Hope, and until the English and Dutch had established themselves in the far east the old commercial routes through the Levant regained something of their former importance.<sup>1</sup>

This prosperity was destroyed, almost as rapidly as it had developed, by the wars of religion which devastated France at the close of the sixteenth century. The cloth industry of Normandy, Languedoc, and Provence, which had been the basis of French trade, was ruined by the fratricidal struggle; and French merchant shipping was plundered with impunity both by English and by the Barbary corsairs, for the ambassador of France at Constantinople had tried, as we have seen, to prevent the admission of the English into the Levant trade, and English reprisals against the attempted monopoly took the same form as they did against the Spaniards in the West Indies.<sup>2</sup> Henry IV succeeded in reviving the trade again and in building it up to a prosperous position. According to de Brèves, who was ambassador to the Porte 1589-1606, French commerce with the Levant at that time reached an annual value of 30 millions of livres, and occupied a thousand ships.<sup>3</sup> But this new edifice was as precarious as its predecessor, and the history of French trade in Turkey for the next sixty years is one of a long and steady decadence.

The causes of this were threefold. In the first place, between the death of Henry IV and the appearance of Colbert the government was prevented from providing any adequate protection or encouragement to commerce by the wars with the emperor and with Spain and by the Fronde, which all exercised a disastrous effect upon trade. The commerce of the Levant was neglected and left to its own resources during half a century when it most needed assistance and support. The second reason was the appearance of English, and later of Dutch, competition. These rivals quickly captured the markets hitherto dominated by France because of the superior quality of their wares and their greater commercial probity. French cloth, in particular, fell into discredit on account of its bad quality and dyeing and the deceit practised over the size of the pieces, while in the French factories fraudulent bankruptcies and the non-

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

observance of contracts forfeited confidence. In ship-building and navigation the superiority of the new-comers was equally marked. Their ships carried three times as much as the French without requiring larger crews, and their system of sailing in convoys proved much safer than the French method of using small vessels which moved about independently and relied for protection on their speed. But the real weakness of the French lay in their faulty organization. The Levant trade was concentrated in the hands of the merchants on the coast of Provence and was controlled from Marseilles, subject always to the ultimate authority of the court. As the court was remote and its attention was occupied by foreign wars and international politics, and as the city of Marseilles was torn by faction, the traffic to the Levant was in effect normally subject to little real supervision. This opened the way for a rich crop of abuses in the factories: consuls who were hereditary or absentees; arbitrary levies on French trade; wholesale speculation and the piling up of large debts; sometimes even collusion between the consuls and the local Turkish officials to bleed the factory of money.<sup>1</sup> In short, organization and discipline were alike lacking.

This great defect, contrasting as it did sharply and disadvantageously with the highly organized condition of the English and Dutch, with the discipline of their officials, and the effective authority which their companies exercised, was the main cause for the collapse of French trade; and its evil results were early shown. By 1626 only two French commercial houses remained at Constantinople; at Aleppo their trade was surpassed by both the English and the Venetians; and the total volume of their commerce in the Levant sank to 14 million livres in 1635. By 1648 it was down to seven millions, and twelve years later French imports from Turkey reached a total of only 2½–3 million livres, while the exports were practically nothing. The entire trade, which in 1610 had occupied a thousand ships, then engaged only thirty.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile a new competitor had arrived. Their long struggle for independence had delayed the Dutch from entering the Levant trade until the French and English were both firmly established in it, but from the end of the sixteenth century they began to appear under the English flag, and in 1612 Cornelius Van Haagen was sent to Constantinople to act as resident, and to procure separate

<sup>1</sup> See Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, chap. v, Les défaillances de l'administration; Zinkeisen, iv, pp. 303–6.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 130–4; Lewis Roberts, p. 139; Pouqueville, p. 573.

capitulations from the sultan. The French, English, and Venetian representatives combined in protest to the grand vizier against this threatened intrusion, just as the French and Venetians had formerly tried to prevent Harborne's reception, and an offer of 10,000 chequins was made in the hope of upsetting Haagen's negotiations. But the Dutchman outbid his opponents with more lavish donations<sup>1</sup> and alluring prospects of ships and munitions to be provided by the Hollanders for the sultan's service, and in July 1612 he got his capitulations from Achmet I.<sup>2</sup> Henceforth the English lost the consulage which they had formerly collected from the Dutch; but down to the outbreak of the civil war there is no evidence in the papers of the Levant Company that the competition of the new arrivals was seriously felt. The Netherlands had great commercial ability, they were well organized under a company at Amsterdam which controlled their trade with Turkey, and in their cloth manufactures, together with their imports from the East Indies and the mineral products which could be obtained cheaply at Hamburg, they possessed a regular supply of those commodities most in demand in the Levant. But in the first half of the century their cloth exports only reached 6,000–7,500 pieces per annum (about a quarter of the English total) and their trade was mainly concentrated at Smyrna.<sup>3</sup> At Aleppo their traffic was described as 'not worth considering'<sup>4</sup> and for a long time they had no consul of their own there,<sup>5</sup> while at Constantinople and elsewhere they were never in a position to challenge the supremacy of the English merchants; but they did succeed in securing a good deal of the carrying trade of the Levant. By 1615 they had a hundred ships employed in it, and were taking out large quantities of English goods.<sup>6</sup> It was not, however, until the disorganization of English trade at the time of the civil war and the Protectorate that the Dutch threatened for a brief period to supplant their rivals in the Levant as they had already done in the East Indies.

From beyond the eastern confines of the Turkish Empire there

<sup>1</sup> Haagen was said to have spent 120,000 dollars in presents (Abbott, *Under the Turk*, p. 300). He remained at Constantinople until 1638 (S.P. 97. 16. Wyche to Rt. Honble. April 27, 1638).

<sup>2</sup> Von Hammer, viii, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 3, 119, 125; Zinkeisen, iv, p. 265; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610–13, pp. 309, 385, 420.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Roberts, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> *Roe Letters*, pp. 289–90. Until 1624 the Dutch had employed the services of the French consul at Aleppo, but in that year Roe succeeded in transferring them under the English flag.

<sup>6</sup> Macpherson, ii, p. 279.

loomed on several occasions the menace that the rich stream of Persian silks which poured into the Levant marts might be diverted through some other channel. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century the trade of Aleppo was affected adversely by the long struggle between Persia under Shah Abbas the Great and the Turks, and the shah was only too anxious to damage his opponents by deflecting from their territory the outlet for Persian goods. To accomplish this he opened up negotiations with the Cossacks of the Black Sea coast and with Russia in order to secure another passage into Europe for the products of his country via Astrakhan, the river Volga and Archangel, or by way of the Black Sea and Poland; and he welcomed the advances which were made to him by English agents for the development of commercial relations through the Persian Gulf. The first to propose this was Sir Anthony Shirley, the most picturesque member of a trio of brothers whose wanderings and adventures outdistanced any fiction. He arrived in Persia in 1599, met Shah Abbas, and secured from him a grant of privileges for Christian merchants trading in his dominions. But Shirley represented nobody but himself, and when he returned to Europe in 1600 with a commission from the shah to win allies for him against Turkey and to promote a closer political and commercial link between England and Persia, Elizabeth's government promptly repudiated him; nor did the Levant Company take the threat to its trade seriously. But when Shirley's brother Robert, who had remained in Persia, came to Europe a few years later upon a similar mission from the shah and was received by King James I (1611) it threw all its influence against the project and successfully scotched it. Friendship with Persia meant incurring the hostility of Turkey which would damage trade in the Levant; while to attract the exports of the shah's realm towards the Persian Gulf would stifle the rich traffic in them which the Company had hitherto carried on through the Turkish ports.

A few years later the danger was revived in more serious form. In 1615 agents were sent to Persia from the English East India Company's factory at Surat where the possibilities of acquiring an outlet for English cloth in the shah's dominions and of diverting the lucrative trade in raw silk to the Persian Gulf had early been recognized. These agents penetrated to Ispahan, obtained a favourable audience with Shah Abbas, and were granted a firman authorizing the English to use the Persian ports. Trade was begun, and the good understanding was cemented when in 1682 the East India



Company's fleet helped the shah to take Hormuz from the Portuguese. In return the English were then given the right to settle at Gombroon and exemption from all customs duties there. The Turkey Company was alarmed by this 'back door' threat to the trade in Persian silk which it drove through Aleppo,<sup>1</sup> but Sir Paul Pindar, who then represented it at Constantinople, refused to take the project seriously, dismissing it as 'all a chimera'; and so, for the time being, it proved. Factors were placed at Ispahan and on the Persian Gulf by the East India Company, but the trade done was precarious and small. There was constant friction with the shah's officials, fierce opposition was encountered from the Portuguese and Dutch, who were both settled in the same area, and for a long time the flow of Persian goods to the Levant was not seriously diminished. But the future proved that the threat had only been delayed, and not destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

A few years before these events members of the Levant Company had themselves attempted to open a new line of communication with Persia, and had been foiled by Turkish exclusiveness. The Black Sea was then a Turkish lake entirely surrounded by the sultan's territory, and few, if any, Christian vessels had been permitted to furrow these Moslem waters when Sir Thomas Glover in 1609 procured a licence for the *Royall Defence* to enter the inland sea. She was the 'first English shippe that ever swome in thosesease', and the voyage gave rise to the suggestion of establishing agents at Trebizond and in Persia in order to carry on the silk trade along that route. In May 1610 John Midnall endeavoured to sail from Constantinople to open up the new project, but he was stopped at the last moment on the flimsy pretence that he was a spy of the Shah of Persia. The truth was that the Turks resented this intrusion of the Giaour, and had determined to keep the Black Sea free from the pollution of his presence. In June 1610 the English were expressly forbidden to go to Trebizond, and for nearly two centuries more no Christian vessels were allowed to enter the Euxine.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 7, f. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, chaps. 30-1; Bruce, *Annals*, i, pp. 207-8; Stevens, p. 272; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, pp. 111-12; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1615-17, pp. 430, 498-9; 1617-19, p. 351. By 1666 the English had 'almost lost' their trade in the Persian Gulf to the Dutch (*H.M.C. Fmch*, i, p. 440).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 6, ff. 103, 160-2; Sanderson, pp. 261-2, 297-8; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1607-10, pp. 477, 506. The Earl of Winchilsea tried to get access to the Black Sea for English ships in 1663, but the request was 'brushed aside with a determined refusal' (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1661-4, pp. 257-8). When the Dutch capitulations were renewed in 1678 permission was given for Dutch merchants and

Apart from the ever-recurring protests against the tyranny and exactions of the local Turkish officials upon the English factories, or against the losses arising from the activities of the Barbary corsairs, which it was the duty of the ambassador to present to the Porte, and the counter-complaints, almost as regular, by the sultan's ministers of the depredations of English privateers in Turkish waters—all of them questions which were part of the ordinary background of life in the Levant at that time—the relations of the Company with the sultan's government were comparatively uneventful. There was an outburst of Turkish truculence in 1616–17 when the caimacam, or deputy-vizier, suddenly threatened to make all the Franks liable to the poll-tax (from which by their capitulations they were exempt) like the Greeks and Jews, and imprisoned Arthur Garraway, one of the principal English merchants. Garraway had purchased at Leghorn some goods which had been captured by a Maltese corsair from a Turkish vessel and had imported them to Constantinople to sell them. There, by a stroke of ill luck, the original Turkish owner recognized them, and raised a storm which cost the unfortunate—and innocent—Englishman £11,000 as well as his imprisonment. Coming on top of a wave of bad trade and of threats to their traffic from developments in the East Indies and in Persia, this ill treatment so discouraged the Levant merchants that they even talked of relinquishing the trade entirely, and it was actually resolved to withdraw the ambassador and leave only an agent at Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> But King James forced the Company to appoint a new ambassador in 1619, and the storm blew over as quickly as it had arisen. In the sixteen-thirties similar complaints were raised of the 'great and insupportable wrongs and injuries' inflicted upon the merchants in Turkey. Some had been imprisoned, their estates had been seized and money extorted, and the Company petitioned the king to write to the sultan about the non-observance of the capitulations which had 'of late been slighted and neglected and wholly violated and broken'.<sup>2</sup> In addition trade was suffering from the corsairs. The English had, wrote the ambassador, to fight

ships to enter the Black Sea, but in fact the Dutch never exercised the privilege, and in 1686 the Turks told the French ambassador that the Sultan would sooner open the doors of his harem to strangers than permit entry to the Euxine (Masson, *Hist. du Commerce Français dans le Levant au 18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 637–8).

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 7, ff. 172, 190; S.P. 105. 113. Company to Winchilsea, Feb. 15, 1665/6; *Carew Letters*, pp. 67, 121; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1615–17, p. 503; 1617–19, p. 254; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1611–18, p. 515; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 16. Heads of a letter for the king to send to the sultan, 1635.

their way in and out of the sultan's ports in order to trade at all, and the result was loss rather than profit.<sup>1</sup>

Yet another source of friction soon appeared in the employment of English ships by both sides during the Turco-Venetian war of 1645-69, for the Turks, although they remonstrated against English vessels being permitted to serve Venice, none the less—with a convenient lack of logic—compelled the ambassador to permit some of his employer's ships to serve them. Bendysh, although he was accused in England—where the Venetians lodged complaints against him—of favouring the Turks against the Republic, did his best to stop this commandeering of ships, and to explain away the presence of English vessels in the service of Venice, but in spite of letters from Cromwell supporting his protests against the forcible seizure of shipping he was unable to prevent it altogether. Nor could he do much to mitigate the severity of the punishments which the Turks meted out to those of his countrymen in the Venetian service who were taken prisoners. The question was one which lasted as long as the war which produced it; and Lord Winchilsea, Bendysh's successor after the Restoration, was no more successful in evading Turkish demands. But the matter never went beyond recriminations, and did not affect the trade of the Company.<sup>2</sup>

At home little occurred in the first thirty years of the new Company's existence which calls for notice. Interloping was a constant source of anxiety and kept the merchants on the *qui vive* in defence of their monopoly. So too was the evasion by unscrupulous members of the duties imposed upon their goods. To prevent this the Company obtained permission in 1634 to appoint an agent who should attend and sign at the customs house all entries of cargoes for the Levant, but even this did not wholly stop the practice. In 1617 there was a skirmish with the Company of Merchant Adventurers, one of whose members had claimed the right to import currants, and the dispute was carried to the privy council before the Merchant Adventurers climbed down and acknowledged the Levant Company's monopoly. A few years later (1625) there was a brush with the town of Southampton which, under a statute of Elizabeth's reign, claimed that all wines imported from the Levant by foreigners should be landed there. But in 1615 the Turkey Company had secured a grant limiting the right of importing those

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 16. Crowe to Rt. Honble. No date.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1653-4, p. 10; 1657-9, pp. 148, 153, 157, 166, 171, 190; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, pp. 104-8.

wines to its members, with the result that Southampton suffered a diminution of its revenue from port duties. In 1625 the town petitioned the privy council on the matter, but the council pointed out that the original privilege had been given by Queen Elizabeth for the maintenance of the walls and sea banks of the port, which had, in fact, been allowed to fall into decay; and its decision went in favour of the Company on the ground that 'the general and public good was to be preferred before a particular'.<sup>1</sup>

The opening of the civil war began a very difficult period for the Company. The majority of its members seem to have been supporters of parliament, for in December 1643 it was resolved to lend the houses £8,000 towards the expenses of the war,<sup>2</sup> and in the following February Isaac Pennington, a convinced puritan who had been chosen Lord Mayor of London in 1642 to control the city for parliament, was elected as governor of the Company<sup>3</sup> to replace Sir Henry Garraway whom the house of commons had deprived of his governorship in April 1643 for being a partisan of the king. The next month (March 7, 1644) the merchants took the precaution of securing a parliamentary ordinance confirming their privileges. The commission which had been appointed in 1622 to inquire into the reasons for the 'deadness' of trade at that time, and to make recommendations for its revival had suggested among other things that the entrance fee of the Levant Company should be reduced to £10. This proposal was adopted; but within twelve months the fee of admission had been raised to £20, and the ordinance of 1644, in addition to giving a general confirmation to all the Company's rights and privileges, put back the entrance fee to the old figures of £25 if under twenty-seven years of age and £50

<sup>1</sup> Carr, *Select Charters*, p. xli; Epstein, pp. 110-12; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1625-49, pp. 44, 69.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 150, Dec. 2, 1643. But some difficulty was found in raising the money and the house of commons had to threaten reluctant subscribers with immediate disenfranchisement of their privileges before the amount was forthcoming (*Journals of the H. of C.*, iii, p. 489, May 11, 1644). On January 30, 1644, the loan was ordered to be repaid, with interest at 8 per cent. out of the excise on flesh and salt (*Journals of H. of Lords*, vi, p. 403).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 150, Feb. 8, 1644; *Journals of the H. of C.* iii, p. 37; Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, i, p. 11. Lloyd (*Memoirs of Excellent Personages*, p. 633) said that Sir Henry Garraway, who had opposed the parliamentary party in London, was 'tossed as long as he lived from prison to prison and his estate conveyed from one rebel to another'. He was imprisoned in Dover Castle in June 1644 (*Journals of the H. of C.*, iii, p. 514). Pennington, who had been one of Charles I's judges, was convicted of treason after the Restoration and died in the Tower, December 1661 (Peck, *Desiderata curiosa*, p. 541).

if above.<sup>1</sup> No further effort was made to change or interfere with the Company's charter before the Restoration.

The trade of the country was disorganized and almost ruined during the stormy years which followed 1642. Business was dislocated by the division of the island into two hostile sections each forbidding traffic with the other, and by the breakdown of the normal means of communication. Production dwindled before the sterner demands of armed strife, markets shrank or became inaccessible, the uncertainty of the future threw a blight upon all trade, and heavy taxation caused by the war depressed the merchant classes. Numerous petitions to parliament prove the terrible plight of trade during the struggle and Rushworth stated that even merchants of good estate and credit 'were hardly able to go on with trade or to pay their debts and maintain their charge'. The clothing industry was particularly affected, for two of its areas, in Yorkshire and in the south-western shires, were among the storm centres of the war, and the king stopped the passage of cloth to London, the great exporting centre. From all areas the clothiers sent in petitions depicting the decay of their business and the distress which it was creating. The capital also suffered from this industrial depression, for it was the great emporium and port of the kingdom, and the severance of its inland trade, the subordination of commercial to military interests, and the proximity of hostile forces produced serious dislocation of its financial organization.<sup>2</sup> In such circumstances it was natural that a body like the Levant Company, centred in London and depending for three-quarters of its exports on cloth, should suffer from the effects of the war, and such evidence as is available shows that its trade was adversely affected.<sup>3</sup> We know that many members of the Company, in order to avoid the dangers and vexations of the time and 'with the lack of business on the mart' lived in retirement; and so many general courts were

<sup>1</sup> *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, i, pp. 395-6; Epstein, p. 107; Lipson, ii, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> On the whole question of the results of the war on industry see chapter ii in James, *Social Policy during the Puritan Revolution*.

<sup>3</sup> In a footnote on p. 61, Miss James in her *Social Policy during the Puritan Revolution* refers to a statement by Mr. G. Ambrose that the Company's trade suffered little diminution during the period 1642-60. My reasons for dissenting from this—and the evidence on which I have based them—are incorporated in the text above. The excellent account which Miss James gives (in chap. ii) of the disorganized state of the country's industry and trade during these years is in itself strong circumstantial evidence against the thesis that the Levant Company escaped unscathed.

summoned at which it was found impossible to get a quorum that fines were imposed, and in 1655 two assistants were even dismissed for absenting themselves.<sup>1</sup> The ship *Hercules* which was appointed in August 1644 to carry out 800 cloths to Smyrna and Constantinople had only laden 400 by May 1645,<sup>2</sup> and in that same year the Company wrote out to the ambassador, Sir Sackville Crowe, of 'the distressed condition' of its trade.<sup>3</sup> Three years later (in 1648) it was compelled to treble the impositions which it collected in order to pay its 'great debts'.<sup>4</sup>

Nor did the collapse of the king's cause bring any immediate improvement in the Company's affairs, for the disorganization of English trade by these internal dissensions afforded an opportunity which the Dutch were not slow to seize, and the rivalry of Holland reached its greatest height during the early days of the Republic. Even as late as 1650 the Company claimed superiority over the Dutch and the French,<sup>5</sup> but the next few years told a different tale. In a petition of February 1649 to the council of state the merchants had already complained that the Hollanders were capturing the Levant trade by means of their large ships, cheap freight and low charges, and that large quantities of Turkish goods were reaching England via Dutch sources.<sup>6</sup> The following year they resolved upon a new petition against this foreign interloping.<sup>7</sup> The Dutch were, in fact, making a deliberate bid for supremacy. They raised their agent at Constantinople to the rank of ambassador, appointed a consul at Smyrna, sent out large quantities of cloth to Turkey,<sup>8</sup> and, when the Anglo-Dutch war broke out in 1653, made no secret of their hope to drive the English out of the Levant trade by making the Mediterranean too hot for them. In that they succeeded for a time, for in March 1653 the English fleet was defeated by them off Leghorn, and Richard Badiley, who commanded it, withdrew with his battered ships to England, leaving to his opponents the unchallenged command of the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> The effect was soon seen. By the autumn the Dutch had captured twenty English ships

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1643-7, p. 50; S.P. 105. 150, July 10, 1644; S.P. 105. 151, March 19, 1654/5.

<sup>2</sup> She sailed the following month (S.P. 105. 150, Aug. 15, 1644; May 8, 1645; June 12, 1645).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Crowe, July 31, 1645.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 150, June 15, 1648.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1650, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1649-50, pp. 11-12.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Dec. 30, 1650.

<sup>8</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1651, p. 290; 1651-2, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1653-4, pp. xv-xvi, 7, 44-6; Corbett, *England in the Mediterranean*, I, chap. xv.

bound for the Levant in the straits of Gibraltar,<sup>1</sup> a large convoy of merchantmen from Turkey was bottled up in Leghorn, and an English agent there reported that 'since our nation has been ousted of the Turkey trade the Dutch and French send twice as many ships thither as formerly'.<sup>2</sup> Blake's expedition to the Mediterranean in the following year and the peace with Holland did something to retrieve the situation; but the competition of the Dutch remained a serious menace. Their low charges won for them the custom of all the Armenian and Jew merchants in the Levant, and even of the English themselves, thereby robbing the Turkey Company of the dues which would otherwise have been paid to its agents, and even after the Restoration competent observers were prophesying that the Hollanders would 'gett away all the trade' and 'eat' the English entirely out of it.<sup>3</sup>

French hostility was for a time an almost equally destructive factor with which the Company had to contend. The sympathy of France with the royalist cause produced hostilities between the two countries in all but name after the execution of the king, and the French corsairs in the Mediterranean reaped a rich harvest of English shipping. In December 1649 the Levant Company stated that eight of its vessels, valued at £300,000, had either been taken or sunk by the French in the Straits. Nine months later (September 1650) its losses had reached twenty 'great ships' of a total estimated value of £500,000-£600,000, while by 1652 another twenty-one vessels had been lost, worth £608,000.<sup>4</sup> But by then it is clear that the English were beginning to pay back their neighbours in their own coin, for French losses at sea from 1651 to 1654 were estimated to amount to 1,320,000 livres.<sup>5</sup> The alliance of the two countries against Spain at the close of Cromwell's life put a stop to this unofficial warfare, but on the other hand war with Spain brought a new danger to trade in the Mediterranean, and from 1655 onwards

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1653-4, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1653-4, p. 130. See also the letter of Charles Longland, English consul at Leghorn to Thurloe, Aug. 1, 1653 (*Thurloe State Papers*, i, p. 376) where he says 'since we hav bin outed all the trade of the Levant is in the hands of the Duch'. In September 1653 (*ibid.* i, p. 656) he wrote that the Dutch had taken twelve English ships in the Mediterranean and had a dozen of their own merchantment in the Levant, the least of which would be worth—with her cargoes—fifty thousand pounds.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, pp. 93, 122.

<sup>4</sup> *S.P.* 105. 144, pp. 23, 47, 97. In 1650 the council of state threatened to issue letters of marque and to order all commanders at sea to seize French ships and keep them until redress was given for these losses.

<sup>5</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, pp. 46-7.

convoys were needed to protect English merchant shipping from the Spanish fleet. As late as 1660 two of the Company's ships were surprised by Spanish men of war and taken as prizes into Gibraltar.<sup>1</sup>

More harmful even than Dutch, French, or Spanish hostility was the corrupt and mutinous spirit which appeared throughout the English factories in the Levant as a result of the dissension and disorganization at home. The relaxation of habits of discipline and obedience which inevitably attend such an upheaval as was then taking place in England spread—as it did to the French settlements in the days of the Revolution—to the little groups of merchants living in Turkey, and for a decade the factories were torn by faction and insubordination. Even in normal times it was not easy to exercise adequate control over the Company's agents, and during the general disturbance of the civil war period nearly all restraint was removed. Trade was virtually suspended for long periods, and the factors were compelled to shift for themselves to earn a livelihood; communications with England were so precarious that the controlling hand from London was robbed of its power; while at Constantinople rival claimants to the embassy and open disobedience to the home authorities<sup>2</sup> rendered nugatory the efforts of the ambassador to preserve order, and encouraged an independent and rebellious spirit in those committed to his charge. The outcome was the growth of a rich crop of abuses which by 1660 had done more than anything to destroy the Company's prosperity.

While ambassadors and consuls quarrelled with and defied one another and all authority from home was weakened, the factors ignored the regulations of the Company and defrauded it of its revenues with impunity. Interloping developed to an enormous extent with the connivance of the Company's servants, who 'coloured' the cargoes of non-members; the consulage or duty payable on all goods bought and sold through the factories (which formed the main source of the Company's revenue) was largely evaded by short or false entries of goods made by the ships' captains and factors working in collusion; purchases made on behalf of the Company were invariably overcharged; fraudulent expenses were booked up for the loss incurred through the changing of money; the difference between English and Turkish

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Nov. 1, 1655; Aug. 25, 1659; June 16, 1660.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. v.



weights was another channel through which the factors secured an illicit profit at the expense of their masters; and by the corruption of the treasurers in the different scales, debts which had really been incurred by individuals in pursuit of their private affairs were shifted, on false pretences, upon the Company's funds. At Constantinople the treasurer's accounts were loaded with such debts and with expenses for presents at exorbitant rates, while the small amount of consulage shown to have been collected convinced the Company that it was being defrauded there also.<sup>1</sup> All the usual openings for speculation were exploited to the full by corrupt bargains between the treasurers and the factors who, since they audited the accounts, found no obstacle to the game of plundering the Company. To maintain themselves they were driven to private trading, for which they used the money of their principals or borrowed at high rates of interest, and many, when their speculations failed, were driven deeply into debt and so had every incentive to take advantage of the prevailing laxity of control to recoup themselves at the Company's expense. The result was that a large debt was piled up in each scale; only a third of the consulage could be collected; and the factors openly defied all regulations and voted away the Company's money at pleasure. At Smyrna they had incurred a debt of 50,000 dollars, while at Aleppo, where the Company's revenue, if honestly collected, should have been double its expenses, there was a large deficit. Orders were repeatedly sent out that all business transactions must be registered by the chancellor of the factory, that strict accounts were to be kept of all private trading, that the treasurers should obtain from each ship's master an exact statement of her cargo and to whom consigned, and from each factor a signed account of all goods received by him, both of which returns were to be sent to England to be checked; and efforts were made to get more reliable treasurers by an order in 1658 that no one should hold that office unless he had resided for at least five years in the Levant, and had been a servant to some freeman of the Company. But it was all in vain, and not until after the Restoration did it become possible to restore order and discipline and retrieve the Company's affairs from the verge of ruin.

Disorder at home, the struggle with the Dutch, French, and Spaniards, the depredations of Prince Rupert's fleet in the Mediterranean, and above all, the internal menace to its strength, soon

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1649-50, p. 90; *ibid.*, 1650, p. 225.

reduced the Company to sore straits. With trade dwindling almost to nothing<sup>1</sup> and huge debts piling up in the Levant it was imperative to curtail expenses, and 'absolute frugality' was enjoined on all its agents. The salary of the ambassador was reduced from 10,000 dollars per annum to 6,000 in 1653,<sup>2</sup> and a little later it was resolved to replace him by an agent until trade improved.<sup>3</sup> In 1651 and again in 1654 the usual annual gratuities to the consuls had to be suspended, and at Constantinople the collapse of business produced an order for the closing of the factory and the transfer of its books to Smyrna<sup>4</sup>—though this was not enforced. Even the Company's jewels had to be sold to raise money.<sup>5</sup> The worst of the crisis was over by 1654, but trade remained depressed until the Restoration,<sup>6</sup> and the abuses in the Levant continued unchecked. In 1660 the Company complained that it was 'well-nigh ruined' by its factors, and the drastic step of surrendering its charters and relinquishing the trade was seriously considered.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1653 the Company wrote of the 'so great and almost a total declination in our trade' (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1653-4, p. 148).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1652-3, p. 119. Bendysh had been given 10,000 dollars per annum instead of the 5,000 chequins which former ambassadors had had. The dollar was then worth about 5s. 6d.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1653-4, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Feb. 21, 1650/1; March 6, 1650/1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, July 17, 1651. They realized £76.

<sup>6</sup> In a petition to Charles II in 1660, the Company told him that its trade had 'lately much declined' (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 204).

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 591; *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 357. As late as 1664 the Company stated that its exports of English goods were only two-thirds of their former volume (S.P. 105. 144, pp. 282-6).

## IV

### THE FACTORIES IN THE LEVANT

A BRIEF survey of the Company's trading stations in the Mediterranean, so far as it is possible to present it from the available evidence, will serve to illustrate the scope and character of its business during these early years of its existence.

Efforts to develop a trade on the Barbary coast, which had begun with the appointment of John Tipton as consul at Algiers, had soon to be abandoned, for a brief experience of intercourse with the three pirate states of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis proved the impracticability of doing any stable business among a people who lived by plunder and rapine. Nominally subjects of the sultan at Constantinople, the three states in fact enjoyed an independence which the presence of a Turkish pasha hardly concealed and in no way limited. Power had passed into the hands of an undisciplined and turbulent body of soldiery who elected—and repeatedly removed by violence—their agas (commanders); and these agas presided, subject to the humour of their troops, over what was perhaps the richest collection of rascality ever assembled in so small a compass. For the native population of Moors, Turks, and Jews was continuously being recruited from the sweepings of all Europe: renegades, outlaws, rebels, and pirates flocked to those military republics where the rest of human society was treated as fair prey, and most of the ordinary sanctions of morality were stayed; and the plunder of Christendom formed the main occupation of this community of outcasts. As corsairs they infested the whole of the Mediterranean, preying upon commerce and upon the coastal populations of France, Spain, and Italy, and enslaving all Christian captives. It was brigandage at its worst—organized, ruthless and bloody, with no discrimination of race, rank, or sex, no respect for treaties or capitulations; and from the very opening of the Levant trade English shipping had suffered at the hands of these freebooters. Hakluyt's pages teem with stories of conflicts between them and English vessels, and as early as 1584 Elizabeth had to write to the sultan protesting against the depredations of his nominal subjects.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt, v, pp. 311-13.

But ashore the pirate states offered a market for cloth, lead, iron, canvas, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cochineal, and gold thread, which could be exchanged for the dates, raisins, lemons, oranges, olives, almonds, and ostrich feathers produced by the hinterland of the North African coast; and the Levant Company hoped by establishing a consul at Algiers not only to protect its members trading there and secure respect for the capitulations, but also to provide a channel for the redemption of the many English slaves who formed part of the corsairs' booty. It was, as experience soon showed, a hopeless quest. During the next fifty years the daring insolence and independence of the Barbary pirates became greater than ever as a group of English adventurers and outcasts, Ward, Bishop, Sakell, and Jennings, taught them to build and navigate ocean-going sailing ships instead of the light Mediterranean galleys. Soon they pushed their raids through the straits of Gibraltar to the very coasts of England and Ireland, and the toll of English ships and captives mounted with each year. From 70 to 100 of these footpads of the seas belonged to Algiers alone, and between 1609 and 1616, 466 English vessels were captured and their crews enslaved.<sup>1</sup>

Retaliation or successful self-defence was apt to be visited upon the persons and goods of the consuls and English merchants who were attempting to trade in these nests of thieves, and who were regarded almost as hostages for the good conduct of their countrymen. To fling the consul into prison and impound the goods of the traders was an obvious and speedy means of redress to a government which regarded all Giaours with contemptuous impartiality as fair prey. Even when such excuses were lacking extortion was still the normal treatment of the hapless Christian merchant, and the 'squeezing' of the infidel, either by the demand for additional payments on the most frivolous of pretexts or by according compliancy and protection only in proportion to the value of the presents received, became a source of revenue which was exploited to the full. To plead the capitulations was almost useless, for the sultan's authority was only a shadow in these titular dominions, and although successive ambassadors procured edicts from Constantinople ordering the observance of the English

<sup>1</sup> Corbett, *England in the Mediterranean*, i, chap. 2; Playfair, p. 34; *Carew Letters*, pp. 61, 66 (1616): 'Every day we hear of our ships taken in the Levant by the Turkish pirates.' Lithgow (p. 288) found Ward living at Tunis in 1615. He had turned Turk, built himself a palace enriched with marble and alabaster, and had fifteen English servants, renegades like himself.

privileges and the redress of past infringements, they met with little but perfunctory lip service.<sup>1</sup>

To traffic under such conditions, however lucrative the actual exchange of goods might be, was difficult, and the Levant Company soon relinquished the attempt. What happened to Tipton is not known,<sup>2</sup> but he was followed by other consuls at Algiers. In 1600 a certain John Audellay was acting in that capacity,<sup>3</sup> and by 1607 Richard Allen held the office;<sup>4</sup> but some time before 1620 Allen either fled or was compelled to escape on an English ship and withdrew to Leghorn.<sup>5</sup> In that year, after long hesitation, the English government, failing to get any redress for the steadily increasing depredations of the corsairs either at Algiers itself or via Constantinople, resolved to compel redress by force, and a naval expedition was dispatched to the Mediterranean under Sir Robert Mansel. Towards the expenses of this the Levant Company in 1619 pledged itself to contribute £4,000 per annum for two years;<sup>6</sup> but the fleet failed at Algiers either to secure restitution of the 150 English ships and their crews captured by the pirates during the previous six years or to destroy the Algerine vessels in the harbour by means of fire ships.<sup>7</sup> Mansel left Richard Forde behind as consul<sup>8</sup> and sailed away without affecting anything.

Two years later Sir Thomas Roe, who was sent out as ambassador to Constantinople, was ordered to invoke the authority of the sultan once more against his piratical subjects under threat of recalling all the English merchants from Turkey and of exacting satisfaction by force 'as well in the Levant as the Redd sea'. This stung the Porte to action, and special agents were sent to Algiers and Tunis with a firman ordering the enforcement of the English capitulations and the restoration of English ships, slaves and goods. After some protests and counter-complaints against the English for the attack of Mansel the two states dispatched representatives to Constantinople, and with these Roe made a formal agreement in March 1623. England was to be permitted to maintain a consul at Algiers with authority over English subjects residing there or

<sup>1</sup> Harborne, Glover, and Roe received letters of this kind from the sultan.

<sup>2</sup> He was still at Algiers in 1591. S.P. 97. 2, Barton to Rt. Honble (Burghley?), June 6, 1591.

<sup>3</sup> Playfair, pp. 31-2.  
<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 110, p. 10. His commission as consul, undated, but probably 1606, is in S.P. 105. 143, pp. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Playfair, p. 42. Allen was made consul at Leghorn in 1621. S.P. 105. 148, Sept. 19, 1621.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1619-23, pp. 15, 41, 296, 302.  
<sup>7</sup> There were about 1,000 English slaves in Algiers at the time (Playfair, p. 45; Roe, p. 52; Corbett, i, chap. viii).

<sup>8</sup> S.P. 71. 1, part i, f. 31.

at Tunis; all English slaves were to be released, their owners being compensated; protection and good treatment was to be accorded to the subjects of the King of England in Algiers and Tunis; and in all waters English, Algerine, and Tunisian ships were to treat one another in friendly fashion and give the usual salutes.

This was ratified, with some reluctance, by the English government<sup>1</sup> and it encouraged the Levant merchants to make another effort to establish a foothold in Barbary. Since 1614 such trade as there was there had been farmed out, probably to Nicholas Leate, a member of the Company,<sup>2</sup> but in 1623 it was resolved to appoint consuls at both Algiers and Tunis.<sup>3</sup> For the former James Frizell was chosen. He had resided for some time in Algiers as agent for Nicholas Leate and had accompanied Mansel's expedition as interpreter and adviser. He now busied himself in securing the ratification and enforcement by the Algiers government of the treaty made at Constantinople, and in redeeming English slaves; but his efforts were costly. The Levant Company resented the expense, feeling that either the crown should recompense Frizell or that the merchants trading to Spain ought to contribute, as they were equally interested in peace with the corsairs. As early as 1624 it was suggested that trade with Algiers should be dropped and the consul recalled.<sup>4</sup> At Tunis William Cooke, who had unofficially been acting as consul for some time, was confirmed in the office in 1623, although the trade there was 'little or none at all'.<sup>5</sup>

Neither the agreement of 1623 nor the presence of these consuls made any difference to the conduct of the corsairs. Their robberies continued with scarcely an interruption and by 1626 Roe confessed that cannon was the only argument likely to produce any real effect. Equally in Algiers itself the plundering of the merchants went on. In 1625 the pasha, on the pretence that the English had seized some Algerine ships at sea contrary to the treaty, imprisoned the consul and all the other English living in Algiers and forcibly

<sup>1</sup> It was rumoured that Roe was in danger of being disavowed (Birch, ii, p. 411).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 147, July 20, 1614.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 148, June 21, 1623; July 24, 1623. On March 11, 1622, the Company had elected a Mr. Cooke as consul at Algiers without allowance (S.P. 105. 109, f. 154). In July 1623 Nicholas Leate was described as consul there (S.P. 97. 1, pt. i, ff. 37-8). Frizell seems to have arrived to take up his duties towards the end of 1624 (see his letter to 'R<sup>t</sup>. Honble', Feb. 12, 1625, in S.P. 97. 1, pt. i, f. 45).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 148, May 25, 1624.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., March 11, 1622; Aug. 21, 1623; S.P. 105. 109, f. 154.

relieved them of £6,000 worth of property.<sup>1</sup> It was probably this episode which determined the Levant Company to recall Frizell, whose term of office had expired;<sup>2</sup> and it is possible that all efforts to trade in Barbary were then dropped. Frizell did not return, and was spoken of as 'consul at Argier' as late as 1643;<sup>3</sup> but he must have remained on his own initiative unless he had received some sort of commission from the government.<sup>4</sup> There is no trace of any further correspondence between him and the Company, and in 1638 the merchants expressly stated that they then refused to trade with Algiers and Tunis.<sup>5</sup> Ten years later, as they told their ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Thomas Bendysh, they were still loth to meddle in those 'barbarous places' because of the ever-present hazard of *avarias*. There is, however, evidence that a few individuals continued to trade. Thus in 1639 a certain Richard Taylor shipped some cloth from Leghorn to Tunis, and Huet Leate, presumably the son of Nicholas, seems to have farmed the trade to Algiers and Tunis, and to have collected the duties payable on cloth sent there during the years 1636-45.<sup>6</sup> Mention occurs also of a Henry Hunt and others who were trading at Tunis in 1648.<sup>7</sup> In July 1646 parliament ordered Edmund Cason to be sent as agent to Algiers to redeem captives and renew the ancient peace with that place and Tunis. Two years later his place was taken by Humphrey Oneby at Algiers and Thomas Browne at Tunis, both commissioned by parliament to release enslaved Englishmen and to endeavour to preserve peace with the pirates.<sup>8</sup> Oneby died in 1653 and was succeeded by Robert Browne in 1655; Thomas Browne, who was made consul in 1650, was still at Tunis in 1660.<sup>9</sup> These consuls were government agents and had nothing to do with the Levant Company. Thomas Browne was appointed by

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 71. 1, pt. i, f. 91; Playfair, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 148, Feb. 25, 1626; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1625-49, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Playfair, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> This possibility is supported by the fact that he corresponded with the secretaries of state until 1637 (S.P. 71. i). <sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1637-8, p. 255.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 149, Aug. 3, 1639; S.P. 105. 150, April 1, 1645. In 1638 William Woodhouse was made consul at Tunis by Sir Peter Wyche and given a royal commission (*Thurloe State Papers*, i, p. 2), but in 1648 the Company resolved 'that as they had no hand in settling Mr. Woodhouse at Tunis so they will not meddle with removing him or naming a successor' (S.P. 105. 150, Oct. 6, 1648).

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 105. 150, May 9, 1648.

<sup>8</sup> *Journals of the House of Lords*, viii, p. 426; S.P. 105. 112. Company to Bendysh, Nov. 9, 1648. Cason remained in Algiers, and died there Dec. 5, 1654. *Thurloe*, iii, pp. 500-1.

<sup>9</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1653-4, p. 130; 1655, p. 363; 1659-60, pp. 337, 362.

the council of state,<sup>1</sup> and Robert Browne is expressly referred to as 'His Highness's (i.e. the Protector's) consul' at Algiers.<sup>2</sup> The only link they had with the Company was that the sultan's barat, or order for their recognition and protection, was still obtained for them through the ambassador at Constantinople; but this was only a formality. After the Restoration the same arrangement was preserved; and though it is possible that some of the Levant merchants continued to trade in the Barbary states, they did so at their own hazard. Henceforward the Turkey Company had no official representatives upon the North African coast.<sup>3</sup>

In its early days the Company had a consul at Leghorn, which by reason of the freedom<sup>4</sup> and cheapness of its port, and of its geographical position, became one of the great pivots for English and Dutch trade in the Mediterranean, being used as a rendezvous by vessels from Barbary, Venice, and the Levant. Sanderson's pages and the Venetian state papers prove that the English went to Leghorn almost from the opening of the Turkey trade, but there is singularly little evidence in the Company's own papers about its affairs there. The appointment of only one consul—Richard Allen—September 19, 1621—is recorded,<sup>5</sup> and there are occasional references to factors living at Leghorn during the civil war period.<sup>6</sup> Then the place disappears from notice. Consuls continued, but from the protectorate onwards (as at Algiers) they were appointed by the government and not by the Company.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is clear from the Venetian state papers that by the sixteenth-century the trade of the English and Dutch was increasing rapidly at Leghorn at the expense of that which they had formerly done at Venice; and the government of the Republic expressed its anxiety

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 112. Company to Bendysh, March 15/25, 1649/50; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1650, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 71. 1, pt. ii, f. 167. Both were paid by the government. The Algiers consul got £400 p.a. The remuneration at Tunis was probably £200 p.a. See *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1655, p. 608; 1656-7, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> Early in Charles II's reign (see undated paper in S.P. 105. 145) the Company recommended as a suitable candidate for the consulate at Algiers Arthur Fossell, 'a Turkey merchant who hath lived in Barbary'.

<sup>4</sup> It was made a free port in June 1593.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 148, Sept. 19, 1621.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 150, April 24, 1641; S.P. 105, 112. Company to factors at Leghorn, May 28, 1648.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan Read was consul at Leghorn from at least as early as 1652 to 1666. His successor, Thomas Dethick, wrote thanking the King for appointing him, Feb. 15, 1666 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1665-6, p. 247).



about the loss as early as 1627-8.<sup>1</sup> In 1629 there was said to be four million crowns worth of English goods lying on the quays of Leghorn.<sup>2</sup> In part the Tuscan port owed this development to its geographical advantages. Whereas it could be reached from England in twenty-four days, the long and dangerous voyage to Venice through the intricate waters of the Gulf was dreaded, and took three times as long; and Leghorn offered also very profitable facilities for an indirect trade with Spain and with Marseilles. Even for the Italian trade it was a better and cheaper distributing centre than Venice. But in part its prosperity was built upon the liberal policy of its rulers which offered a freedom and a cheapness unknown at Venice. Only one dollar per bale was demanded on goods of all kinds, which could then remain in the port for a year and be taken elsewhere without further charge; and because of this advantage of having twelve months for the sale of goods without additional cost, the merchants of Genoa and Lucca kept agents there who were always ready to purchase cargoes and unlade ships immediately. At Venice, on the other hand, trade was crushed by the heavy import, export, and transit duties imposed. It was stated in 1628 that the cost of one bale of goods going to Vicenza through Leghorn was one dollar for unloading and transit at Leghorn and 8 dollars for the land carriage to Vicenza, whereas through Venice the transport cost from 30 to 40 dollars.<sup>3</sup> In face of such facts and figures the preference shown for Leghorn is easily understood.

At Venice the Levant Company also had a consulate, but there is a similar paucity about our knowledge of it. It does not seem to have been in existence in 1600, but in 1606, when the surviving letters of the Company begin, James Higgons held the position and was in regular correspondence with the governing body in London.<sup>4</sup> There was evidently a regular succession of consuls for a time, for in 1618 Henry Parvish was appointed to succeed a Mr. Hassall in the office;<sup>5</sup> but by 1645 the Company was represented only by an agent, one John Hobson.<sup>6</sup> He asked for the title of consul in 1652, but was told 'as for the name of consul which you

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1626-8, pp. 380, 599.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1629-32, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> See *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1628-9, pp. 58-9; *ibid.*, 1636-9, p. 402.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, x, p. 462; Letters to Higgons in S.P. 105. 110. These cease in 1609 and Higgons was back in England in 1610. His commission as consul dated Jan. 10, 1605, is in S.P. 105. 143, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 148, Dec. 3, 1618.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Hobson, Jan. 16, 1644/5.

conceive might enable you the better to perform the service we are not willing to renew a title which hath been so long discontinued'.<sup>1</sup> He died in 1662, but his annual allowance was continued to his nephew of the same name.<sup>2</sup> In 1689 it was discussed whether 'as very few letters pass through the hands of Mr. Hobson' the Company might ease itself of his stipend, but it was eventually resolved to continue it.<sup>3</sup> There was an English consulate in Venice after the Restoration, but it was maintained by the crown; the Company had no connection with it,<sup>4</sup> though its members were certainly trading there in Charles II's reign. It told the committee of trade and plantations in 1673 that 12-14 ships were sent annually to Venice carrying out fish, tea, pepper, sugar, ginger and woollen goods in return for silks, glasses, beads, oils and drugs. The exports were valued at from £60,000 to £70,000 per annum, the returns only at £15,000, the difference being made up in bills of exchange on England or sent in specie to Zante or Turkey.<sup>5</sup> From then onwards, however, Venice almost entirely vanishes from the Company's records. A good deal of the trade formerly done there undoubtedly moved to Leghorn,<sup>6</sup> and the traffic in currants, which had at first been centred in Venice, was also lost early in the seventeenth century when the English buyers began to go direct to the islands of Zante and Cephalonia.<sup>7</sup> These changes probably account for the suppression of the Company's consulate. The customs returns prove that some trade was being done between England and Venice in the eighteenth century, but whether it was then still in the hands of the Levant Company seems doubtful. At least the Company's papers contain no evidence of any business done there later than the period 1660-88.

The island of Zante was the centre of the Company's trade in the dominions of Venice. English ships had frequented it as far back as 1533,<sup>8</sup> and there were factors living on the island at least as early as 1586.<sup>9</sup> In 1616 and again in 1626 a native was appointed

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 112. Company to Hobson, Sept. 10, 1652.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 152, July 15, Nov. 24, 1662.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 155, Dec. 4, 1689; Feb. 7, 1690.

<sup>4</sup> See *H. M. C. Finch*, i, p. 213, for the appointment of Giles Jones by the king as consul at Venice.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 145, pp. 48-52.

<sup>6</sup> As early as 1629 the Venetian ambassador in England wrote of the danger of 'the scanty remains of English trade at Venice' passing to Leghorn (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1629-32, p. 116).

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1592-1603, p. 347.

<sup>8</sup> Williamson, J., *Foreign Commerce of England under the Tudors*, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Hakluyt, vi, p. 40; Fynes Moryson: 'some English merchants continually reside at Zante' (pt. i, bk. 3, p. 268).

to act as vice-consul there by the Levant Company,<sup>1</sup> but the first Englishman to hold the office seems to have been John Cowley, nominated in 1628.<sup>2</sup> The climate was an unhealthy one, and the mortality among the factors was high;<sup>3</sup> but the demand for currants in England, and to a lesser extent in Holland, drew the English and Dutch there, and a large traffic was done which made the island rich in itself and a little gold-mine for its Venetian rulers. Cloth, lead, and tin were the chief articles bartered by the English merchants at Zante for the currants, honey, wax, oil, and wine which the island produced, but as we have seen the export of currants was so great that a large balance had to be paid every year in cash. Many deplored the passion for this 'liquorish stuff' which poured such vast sums of English money into 'these holes' (as Roe stigmatized Zante and its neighbouring isles) and condemned their countrymen 'who forsooth can hardly digest bread, pastries, broth and bag-puddings without those currants'.<sup>4</sup> But currants, like tea at a later date, pleased the palates of the English public, and the laments of economists and moralists all failed to stem the traffic.<sup>5</sup>

So certain indeed were the Venetians that the consumption of these berries had become 'an inveterate habit' which the English would never relinquish<sup>6</sup> that they exploited it to the full by steadily increasing the duties which had to be paid by foreign merchants at Zante, and throughout the first half of the seventeenth century the Levant Company's correspondence is full of complaints against these impositions. A very heavy impost had been placed on the export of currants in 1580, and when during the next twenty years the English began to go direct to Zante for their fruit, instead of to Venice as they had done formerly, the Venetians, in the hope of diverting the trade back to its old channel, passed a law in 1602 compelling all currants to be sent to Venice and making the city the staple for all those which were shipped to the west.<sup>7</sup> To avoid

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 147, Aug. 2, 1616; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1625-6, p. 505.

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, p. 215. Thomas Symonds was appointed consul April, 1638 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, p. 402). In 1641 Mr. Burdet, consul at Zante, was reported to have died (S.P. 105. 150, Aug. 19, 1641) and in Nov. 1650 Henry Champion was appointed agent (not consul) there (S.P. 105. 151, Nov. 4, 1650).

<sup>3</sup> Sandys, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Lithgow, pp. 74-5; Roe, pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> Ten English ships were said to go to Zante every year for currants (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1642-3, pp. 14-15).

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1640-2, p. 234.

<sup>7</sup> At the time foreign ships were prohibited from carrying any linen, cotton, or wool thread from Egypt, Syria, or elsewhere to Venice. The aim was to pro-

this, the English not only developed a large contraband trade in the coveted berries, but they also transferred much of their business to Patras, the collecting station for the fruit of the Morea. The Greek currants were not so good as those of the neighbouring islands; but money was advanced to the growers to encourage the cultivation and preparation of the fruit, and skilled dressers were tempted over from Zante. Soon there were few ships going to Venice for currants, the trade of Zante was languishing, and in 1609 the Venetians had to repeal their prohibition of the direct export of fruit from the island.<sup>1</sup>

In 1625 a new dispute with Venice arose. Some Venetian merchants had chartered an English ship in London which sailed to the Levant under the English flag, but hoisted Venetian colours as it entered the port of Alexandretta and refused to pay consularage on the cargo to the English consul at Aleppo. Roe, the ambassador at Constantinople, at once took up the question, for it was evident, as he wrote, 'if any stranger may trade in our shipping under the colours of another prince, that the privileges guaranteed to the Levant Company are of no use, but rather hurtful, for the stranger may colour Englishmen's goods that are not free, and escape all duties which are paid to the Company to bear the general charges'.<sup>2</sup> A long squabble ensued in which the Venetians were at last obliged, in 1627, to climb down and forbid all subjects of the Republic to load or hire any foreign vessel.

They got their revenge, however, by a new decree forbidding any ship to load a return cargo of currants at Zante or Cephalonia unless it could be proved that at least two-thirds of its outward freight had been unloaded at Venice. Failing this, an additional fee of five ducats the thousand was imposed upon the purchaser. These new statutes, wrote Roe indignantly, 'principally regard the English whom they think so enamoured with plum porridge, cakes and pies as they will with currants swallow anything'; but the extra duty had to be paid, and it gave the Venetians another 50,000 dollars per annum revenue at the expense of English trade.<sup>3</sup>

During the next few years the screw was tightened still more. Further duties were added, until the taxes paid by the Levant merchants exceeded the cost of the currants they purchased, and tect Venetian trade and damage that of England in the Levant (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603-7, p. 80).

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1607-10, pp. 246-7, 253, 270; 1603-7, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Roe to the lords of the council, Nov. 12, 1625, *Letters*, pp. 446-8.

<sup>3</sup> Roe, *Letters*; Zinkeisen, iv, pp. 319-23; Lewis Roberts, pp. 73-4.

the Venetian authorities in the islands compelled the English each year to take a large quantity of spoiled fruit at exorbitant rates. Vehement protests were raised against this treatment, and some of the merchants even talked of taking a cargo of plants from the Morea to Virginia or New England and developing the production of currants in America, which would remove their dependence upon Venice for the fruit. In 1641 the Company proposed to parliament that the import of all currants should be prohibited until the Venetian duties were reduced, and in March 1642 the house of commons passed a bill to that effect. This was sent up to York for the king's consent, and was vetoed by him; but a parliamentary ordinance was at once issued forbidding the fruit to be imported, and the Company threatened all members with expulsion who tried to ignore the prohibition. Venice promptly retaliated by excluding all English cloth from her dominions until the embargo on currants was removed. As a final counter-threat to this 'to the end that the Venetians may not be unsatisfied of the reality of the intention of parliament', and consequent upon the diminution of the trade in currants, the Company went so far as to order the recall of all factors from Zante and Cephalonia.<sup>1</sup>

Neither side gained very much in this exchange of blows. Acute distress was produced in the currant islands by the stoppage of their trade, and in 1643 the Venetians, to alleviate it, were driven to reduce slightly the duties on the export of currants. On the other hand the Levant Company soon found that its ships which had carried cloth to Constantinople and which used to load at Zante on the homeward voyage now had to return empty; and the prohibition against importing currants only produced a considerable illicit trade by interlopers. Moreover, divided as the country was by civil war, the parliamentary ordinance could not be enforced in royalist territory, and the king permitted currants to be unloaded at Bristol. Even before the end of 1642, therefore, the Company had petitioned parliament for liberty to import the fruit again, but it was not until March 1644 that the desired permission was given and the traffic was resumed.<sup>2</sup> During the next sixteen years it was considerably diminished both by the civil war in England, which reacted adversely upon the Company's trade,

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 150, Feb. 15, 1643/4.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1640-2, pp. 168-70, 173, 180-1, 184, 234, 238-9; *ibid.*, 1642-3, pp. 14-15, 97, 138, 143, 156, 163, 212, 232-3; *ibid.*, 1643-7, pp. 19-20, 43, 82; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1644, p. 59; *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, i, pp. 396-7.

and by the extortion of the Venetian officials in the islands, who compelled the English factors to purchase great quantities of fruit of an inferior quality at excessive prices, and in addition to the ordinary duties demanded an extra payment of a real per thousand.<sup>1</sup> By the Restoration the trade was 'greatly diminished' and 'in great measure dropped from lack of good treatment', until the Venetian government, alarmed by the decline, sent strict orders to the islands against the new impositions. For this step it was thanked by the Company, which had previously protested to the ambassador of the Republic in London about the treatment of its members at Zante, and by 1663 the trade seems to have been resumed again on more satisfactory terms.<sup>2</sup>

Patras in the Morea, which was one of the earliest of the Levant Company's consulates,<sup>3</sup> was for long its only factory on the Greek mainland. In addition to currants, grapes, madder and vermilion were purchased there. The trade which was done in currants with Zante, Cephalonia, and Patras caused the Company a great deal of trouble and was from time to time the subject of special regulations. So great was the demand for the fruit in England that the factors were tempted to bid against one another, thus raising the price and encouraging the extortions of the Venetian government; and heavy buyings repeatedly produced a glut in the English markets. To prevent this, efforts were made by the Company—though apparently with little success—to fix the price to be paid for currants, or to impose a 'stint', i.e. to limit the total quantity to be imported annually into England, allotting quotas to the individual merchants,<sup>4</sup> or to forbid the lading of ships except within certain specified periods, or sometimes to appoint a sole buyer of currants. In 1611, 1613, and again in 1632 the Morea trade was farmed out,<sup>5</sup> but the most usual method adopted to

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1655-6, p. 64; *ibid.*, 1661-4, pp. 32, 136, 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1661-4, pp. 32, 36, 88-9, 136, 159, 227, 233, 268.

<sup>3</sup> Hakluyt, v, p. 285. There was a consul there in 1584. Aldersey found a consul and two English merchants at Patras in 1586 (Hakluyt, vi, p. 40). From Sanderson it is possible to compile a list of the early consuls. One Rovet or Rivet was consul in 1586 (p. 3). Robert Gould held the office by 1592 (p. 56, note 4); Jonas Alderich was appointed in 1596 (p. 144), and Abraham Nottingham succeeded him in 1600 (p. 205).

<sup>4</sup> Thus in 1633 imports of currants from Zante were limited to 2,200 tons, which was thought to be as great a quantity as the country could consume (S.P. 105. 149, pp. 60-1).

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 147, July 9, 1611; May 5, 1613; *ibid.*, 149, May 12, 1632. In 1611 it was leased for five years to four members of the Company for 2,000 chequins per annum (S.P. 105. 148, Aug. 10).

control the trade and the market in England was to organize a separate joint stock for a period of years within the ranks of the Company, giving it a monopoly of the traffic. This also ensured that the lucrative trade should not be engrossed into the hands of a few big men. The earliest adoption of the practice which I have found was in 1616,<sup>1</sup> and other joint stocks were formed in 1622, 1624, and 1633. In 1641 it was resolved to carry on the currant trade with the Morea for the Company in general and a committee was elected to control it. This joint stock for the account of the generality was confirmed in 1643, and seems to have lasted throughout the civil-war years.<sup>2</sup> In 1647 it was determined that the trade 'as well of the Morea as of the islands' (i.e. of Zante and Cephalonia) should be conducted by a joint stock for a period of three years, the profits to be used towards clearing the Company's debts. The money for the joint stock was raised by borrowing from members at a fixed rate of interest.<sup>3</sup> Ten years later (1657) the Morea trade was again reduced to a joint stock, the preamble of the regulation asserting that the trade 'which hath bin heretofore many ways beneficiall' had now become 'wholly unprofitable as to the whole body of merchants, being (and without any considerable advantage else) of late yeares engrossed into the hands of a few to the prejudice of the generality'.<sup>4</sup> The Zante trade never seems to have been brought into a joint stock again—although it was proposed in 1664 'as the only way to advance the same and reduce currants to moderate rates'; but from 1657 onwards it became the regular custom to renew the Morea joint stock for periods of three or five years.<sup>5</sup> After the Restoration the profits made went to the subscribers of the stock and not to the Company as a whole. At the beginning of each period of three or five years a book of subscriptions was opened and all members of the Company who so desired could enter their names for any amount

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 147, Nov. 27, 1616.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 150, April 29, 1641; March 19, 1643.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., May 12, 1647; June 2, 1647; S.P. 105. 143, May 12, 1643. But this joint stock did not last. The following year trade to the islands was left open (ibid., June 23, 1648).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Aug. 1657.

<sup>5</sup> Renewals were made in 1664, 1667, 1670, 1673, 1676, 1682, and 1685 (in the case of 1676 and 1685 for five years). The preamble of the 1682 Regulation began: 'The trade in the Morea of particular members on their own private account having enhanced the price of commodities of the Morea imported hither and reduced the value of English goods exported there—and this trade having been best managed by a joint stock, and the last stock which was to continue for five years being expired,' &c.

between £50 and £100. If enough was not obtained the subscribers could increase their subscriptions proportionately and they were similarly reduced if too much was offered. The business was then conducted by a committee of the subscribers elected by themselves, and all other members of the Company were forbidden to trade in the area under penalty of 20 per cent. levied on the goods handled by them. This monopoly was limited by one condition only. If the adventurers in the joint stock did not send a ship to the Morea for two years, it became lawful for any of the Levant merchants to trade there on their own account.<sup>1</sup>

The factory at Constantinople, which dated from the inception of the Company, was one of the largest English settlements in the Levant. Exact figures are not obtainable, but there were probably about twenty-four to twenty-five factors living there in the first half of the seventeenth century, in addition to their servants and dependents.<sup>2</sup> It was a great market for English cloth, some of which was purchased by the court and its various officials, while the rest was forwarded by caravan to Persia. Lead, tin, furs, and drugs (brought to England by the East India Company) were also in good demand. In return mohair, programs, Persian silk, carpets, gold, pepper, indigo, aniseed, nutmegs, and cinnamon were purchased.<sup>3</sup> Angora was the centre of the mohair trade, and there is evidence that English agents visited there to purchase the yarn in Harborne's time.<sup>4</sup> From 1624 onwards some factors seem to have been permanently resident in the town.<sup>5</sup>

Chios was another of the original consulates of the Company, but until it was moved to Smyrna it remained of little importance. The exact date of the change is uncertain. Sandys was entertained by the English consul on Chios in 1610; but Lewis Roberts stated that in 1619 the consulate was at Smyrna.<sup>6</sup> The Company's papers give no help, for John Markham, who was appointed in 1611, is

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 154, pp. 327-9, 441.

<sup>2</sup> Rycaut, in his continuation of Knolles, p. 71, prints a letter to the Levant Company from Constantinople in 1646 protesting against the conduct of the ambassador, Sir Sackville Crowe, signed by thirty-five names. Of these, eleven were members of the Smyrna factory whom Crowe had ordered to Constantinople. This would leave twenty-four as the probable number of the Constantinople factory.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Roberts, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis Roberts (p. 123) says two merchants were sent there from Constantinople about 1624, and the Levant Company in a letter of 1626 speak of 'the firm settling of trade' at Angora (S.P. 105. 110. Company to Roe, July 28, 1626).

<sup>6</sup> Sandys, p. 12; Roberts, p. 117.



spoken of in correspondence indifferently as consul at Smyrna, consul at Chios, and consul at Chios and Smyrna. Probably it was during this period, 1610-20, that the move took place; and from the sixteen-thirties onwards even the name of Chios dropped out of the consul's title. Once established, the factory at Smyrna grew rapidly, and in the end became the most important of all the Company's settlements. The harbour was good, the Christians enjoyed greater freedom and security there than in the more remote towns of the Ottoman Empire, and in time more and more of the Persian goods which had formerly gone to Aleppo were diverted to Smyrna. In addition to the silks of Persia, the factory was a great collecting centre for the mohair of Asia Minor and for the cotton which grew in the district, while from Chios and the adjacent islands some silk, wine, and turpentine were procurable. At first a much greater volume of trade was handled at Constantinople, but by 1649 the business of the Smyrna factory had overtaken and surpassed that done in the capital.<sup>1</sup> In 1646 there were at least twenty-two merchants living there,<sup>2</sup> and after the Restoration their numbers rose to nearly fifty.<sup>3</sup>

During this early period of the Company's history a native was employed as consul on the island of Crete,<sup>4</sup> which was then a Venetian possession, and a few ships seem to have visited there. But the island lay rather out of the ordinary track of ships and there was little to export from it but wine and a few muscats.<sup>5</sup> Moreover the inhabitants had an evil reputation for homicide on slight provocation, as Lithgow found during his visit; and the Venetian officials were guilty of extortion. By 1637 complaints were being made at Venice that the English had entirely given up frequenting the island;<sup>6</sup> and the long struggle for Candia between the Republic and the Turks which began in 1645 effectively prevented all attempts to trade there for the next twenty-four years.

The island of Cyprus was at first included under the consulate of Aleppo and no separate representative of the Company resided there, though English ships frequented it from the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1649-50, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Rycaut, continuation of Knolles, pp. 67-74. Ten members signed a letter to the Company in 1646 after the consul and eleven others had been removed to Constantinople by Crowe's orders.

<sup>3</sup> Forty-nine members are mentioned in 1661 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 491).

<sup>4</sup> One Vivian Segari was acting in 1610 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, p. 53).

<sup>5</sup> There was little outlet for the wine in England. Every year some was sent on to Hamburg to get rid of it (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, p. 402).

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, pp. 320, 344.

the Levant trade. But a certain Richard Glover, who had established himself on the island and had apparently adopted the rank of consul, wrote to the Company in 1636 asking for confirmation in that office; and the request was favourably received. Glover was appointed vice-consul under the consul at Aleppo, with the consular he collected as his remuneration, and henceforward Cyprus took its place among the permanent establishments of the Company.<sup>1</sup>

Oil, wine, honey, turpentine, alum, and grograms were produced there, but the largest trade was done in cotton, and it was to the cotton wool imported from Cyprus and from Smyrna and Syria that the Lancashire cotton industry owed its foundation. Cotton was first used in Europe in Moorish Spain in the tenth century, and from there spread to northern Italy and so across the Alps to Germany and Flanders. Fabrics containing cotton were probably being manufactured in the Low Countries by the fourteenth century; and in the sixteenth century the fustians of Ulm and Augsburg were renowned all over the continent. In its raw state cotton had long been known in England, the wool being imported<sup>2</sup> and used for stuffing and quilting and as yarn for candlewicks, but the so-called 'cottons' which were being made in Lancashire, especially round Manchester and Bolton, in the sixteenth century, were almost certainly woollen cloths of some kind, and it was probably not until the immigration of Dutch and Flemish weavers after the outbreak of religious persecution in the Low Countries, and the introduction of a plentiful supply of cotton wool from the Levant by the newly developed trade in Elizabeth's reign, that fustians made with a cotton weft and a linen warp were produced in England.<sup>3</sup>

It is not possible to assign any precise date to this important development. A petition of various London fustian dealers in 1621 stated that

'about twenty years past divers people in this kingdom, but chiefly in the county of Lancaster, have found out the trade of making fustians, made of a kind of bombast or down, being a fruit of the earth growing upon little shrubs or bushes brought into the kingdom by the Turkey

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Wandesford (consul at Aleppo), June 24, 1636; Epstein, p. 216; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, p. 431, note; S.P. 105. 149, May 19, 1636. Teixeira (*Travels*, p. 134) stated that there was an English consul in Cyprus in 1605—but I have not discovered any confirmation of this early existence of a consulate on the island.

<sup>2</sup> The first English ships mentioned by Hakluyt as trading with the Levant brought back cotton wool (1511 and 1534) (v, pp. 62-3, 68).

<sup>3</sup> It had not yet been discovered how to spin a thread strong enough to be used for the warp.

merchants from Smyrna, Cyprus, Acre and Sidon, but commonly called cotton wool; and also of linen yarn most part brought out of Scotland and othersome made in England; and no part of the same fustians of any wool at all.'

By then, it was said, 40,000 pieces of these fustians were being made annually. But it is possible to push back farther than these petitioners the rise of the cotton industry, for in 1586 the Levant Company wrote to its factors at Aleppo ordering them to buy cotton yarn which was needed for the manufacture of fustians.<sup>1</sup> Lewis Roberts, writing in 1641, said of Manchester: 'they buy cotton wool in London that comes first from Cyprus and Smyrna and work the same into fustians, vermillions and dimities which they return to London', whence they were often re-exported whither they had come.<sup>2</sup> By the middle of the century it is clear that there was a well-established industry in Lancashire depending upon a regular import of raw material from the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup>

In the early days the factory at Aleppo stood almost on an equality with that of Constantinople, and in point of trade probably surpassed it. When the consulate was moved there from Tripoli, where Harborne had originally planted it, we do not know, but it must have been soon after Forster's appointment. As the terminus of the great caravan routes from Persia and Mesopotamia, Aleppo was the obvious seat for a factory, and from the first we have evidence of English merchants residing there.<sup>4</sup> Sanderson's correspondence proves that by 1586 it had become a regular seat of trade for the Company, and seems to suggest that James Towerson, who died in that year, was consul, and was succeeded in the office by John Eldred.<sup>5</sup> In 1592-4 Michael Lock was consul,<sup>6</sup> and in 1596 George Dorrington was acting as vice-consul during an interregnum.<sup>7</sup> He was replaced that year by Thomas Sandys, and from then onwards we can trace an almost unbroken line of successors.<sup>8</sup> Sanderson's letters also show that by 1596 the factory consisted of at least fourteen merchants.<sup>9</sup> In 1605, according to

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 131.      <sup>2</sup> Lewis Roberts, *The Treasure of Traffike*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> For the introduction of cotton into England, see Wadsworth and Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire*, and Daniels, *The Early English Cotton Industry*.

<sup>4</sup> William Barret has already been mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> Sanderson, pp. 130-6.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 109, f. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Sanderson, pp. 146-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167. (See Appendix II.)

<sup>9</sup> Fourteen factors signed a document at Aleppo in 1596 refusing to recognize George Dorrington as vice-consul any longer (Sanderson, p. 151).

Teixeira, the Venetians did the largest trade there, the French coming second, and the English rather a poor third,<sup>1</sup> but thirty years later Lewis Roberts stated that his countrymen were then doing more trade at Aleppo than any of the Christian nations, the Venetians holding second place, and the French third.<sup>2</sup> Purchases included local growths like grograms, galls, and cotton; oriental goods which were still brought in by a great annual caravan from Bassora; and above all, silk from Persia. It was the great traffic done in this last which made the factory so important; and it stimulated a flourishing silk industry in England. Thomas Mun, writing in the sixteen-thirties, spoke of 'a notable increase in our manufacture of winding and twisting only of forraign raw silk which within 35 years to my knowledge, did not employ more than 300 people in the city and suburbs of London, where at this present time it doth set on work above fourteen thousand souls'.<sup>3</sup>

Aleppo stood eighty miles inland, and at first the English used Tripoli as its port, but they soon moved up to Alexandretta or Scanderoon where an agent or 'factor-marine' was established as early as the fifteen-nineties to handle the Company's traffic,<sup>4</sup> the goods being conveyed to and from Aleppo by camels. It was an open roadstead in which merchant shipping was always liable to attack by pirates and privateers, and to prevent this mischief for the future the Turkish authorities in 1609 decreed the closing of the port, and the transference of the trade to Tripoli, whither the English, French, and Venetian consuls were ordered to migrate. The step met with great opposition, the English ambassador even hinting that his countrymen might have to give up all trade in the area, which would be a serious blow to the sultan's customs revenue; but it was only after long and costly negotiations that the merchants secured the reopening of Scanderoon in 1613 and were able to return there. Exposed and fever-stricken as it was, the harbour of Tripoli proved to be just as open, and the pasha who resided there had a reputation for tyranny and extortion which made the Franks glad to quit it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Teixeira, *Travels*, pp. 118-20. He asserts that the annual trade done at Aleppo by the Venetians was worth a million or a million and a half in gold; by the French 800,000 ducats; by the English 300,000 ducats.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis Roberts, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter of 1599 the Company mentions 'Edward Rose, our late factor' at Scanderoon (Stevens, p. 278).

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603-7, p. 318; 1607-10, pp. 267, 376, 456; 1610-13, p. 476; Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, pp. 380-1; Sandys, p. 238.

It is probable that a consulate or vice-consulate existed for some time at Tripoli after the main seat of trade had been moved to Aleppo;<sup>1</sup> but the Company had no other establishments upon the Syrian coast (except Scanderoon) during this period of its history, though some of its members certainly traded at Sidon and Acre, probably under the protection of the French consuls in those places.<sup>2</sup> The French were much more strongly represented, and they had acquired a preponderant position in the area which the English and Dutch were never able to destroy.

The first attempt to establish a consulate in Egypt was unsuccessful, as has been shown, and for fifty years after Bishop's removal the direct traffic done there seems to have been insignificant in amount. In 1639 the Levant Company told the ambassador at Constantinople not to go to any trouble or expense to promote the trade with Alexandria, since it was not a good scale for English commodities and the traffic which already existed was not sufficient to encourage any outlay.<sup>3</sup> There are occasional references to vessels sailing between England and Alexandria,<sup>4</sup> but Egypt is scarcely mentioned in the papers of the Company during this period, and it is probable that the bulk of the trade which the English did there was confined to the eastern Mediterranean. Egypt exported large quantities of flax and linen goods, hides, and rice to Italy, Greece, and Syria, and corn to Constantinople, and it was participation in this local traffic rather than the barter of English goods which still took a few English merchants and ships to Alexandria. Thus in 1602 the ship *Angel* took out from London cloth, tin, and lead to be sold at Algiers, Tunis, and Alexandria, and in the last-mentioned port the captain was instructed to try to get a cargo of leather for Leghorn.<sup>5</sup> The following year there is mention of an English ship from Alexandria selling spices at Modon,<sup>6</sup> and again in 1623 of another English vessel trading between Alexandria and Venice,<sup>7</sup> while d'Arvieux travelled from Smyrna to Egypt in 1657 in an English ship which had been

<sup>1</sup> A consul is mentioned there in 1591 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1591-4, p. 89) and again in 1601 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1592-1603, p. 481). I have found no other reference to a consulate until 1663 when a Dutchman was acting as joint vice-consul for the English and the Dutch (*H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 271). Arvieux, ii, p. 388, says that the English traded there in 1660.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, pp. 205, 212.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Sackville Crowe, April 12, 1639.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1607-10, p. 415; *ibid.*, 1628-9, pp. 28, 79; *ibid.*, 1643-7, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603-7, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1592-1603, p. 518.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1623-5, p. 125.

freighted by some Turkish merchants to carry goods and slaves to Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was there little outlet for English goods in Egypt, but the chief incentive which had first taken the Elizabethan merchants there—the desire to procure supplies of eastern goods—disappeared early in the seventeenth century when the Dutch and English East India Companies began to pour those commodities into Europe at nearly half the price at which they could be purchased in the Levant. This not only made it unprofitable to buy such goods in Turkey, but it actually reversed the current of trade done in them through the Mediterranean, for the cost of oriental products brought round the Cape was sufficiently low to make it profitable to re-export them from England to Turkey where, after the double journey, they could still be sold cheaper than similar articles which had come over the caravan routes or via the Red Sea. The turning tide of trade was visible as early as 1610, when Sandys found that the commerce between Egypt and the east had decayed ‘since our East-Indian voyage, in so much as spices brought out of the Levant are now with profit brought thither by our merchants’.<sup>2</sup> Lithgow in 1612 also noted that the trade in spices at Alexandria ‘is now discontinued by the Portuguese, English and Dutch who bring home such wares by the back side of Africa, so that the traffic of Alexandria is almost decayed’.<sup>3</sup> Similarly in 1626 the Venetian ambassador at Constantinople reported that the English and Dutch were then importing into Turkey the eastern goods they had hitherto purchased there.<sup>4</sup>

Some time before 1652 an English merchant, Abbot by name, who was living in Cairo, had assumed the title of consul for his nation, perhaps under a commission from the ambassador, Sir Thomas Bendysh, but he had made himself unpopular by demanding extortionate dues or consulage from those who traded under his protection, and Bendysh wrote home reporting that the grand vizier was urging him to replace Abbot, and that if something was not done all trade with Egypt would be lost.<sup>5</sup> In reply the Company wrote back ‘concerning the late consul at Cairo and the appointment of another to succeed him, the Company never held it fit to settle a consul there, nor had any hand in his establishment,

<sup>1</sup> D’Arvieux, i, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Lithgow, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1625–8, p. 280.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 17. Bendysh to the council of state, July 13, 1652; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, and the Great Powers*, p. 126.

nor any correspondence with him, nor intend to meddle therein hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

What happened in the next few years is not clear. In 1657 Thevenot found an English consul at Cairo,<sup>2</sup> who was probably the man commissioned by Bendysh in that year, although he had no permission from London and the Company expressly disowned the appointment 'in respect of the manifold hazards they are thereby subject to'.<sup>3</sup> This consul appears to have been Bendysh's own son, who certainly had trading interests in Egypt and was acting as consul there a few years later. When Sir Thomas Bendysh was recalled from Constantinople by Charles II after the Restoration he himself asked to be appointed consul at Cairo, believing that he could erect a factory there with good results; but the Levant Company refused to sanction the idea.<sup>4</sup> In 1663 a resolution of the Company reaffirmed the determination of the merchants to be drawn into no commitments in Egypt. 'There being at Cairo a person remaining under the title of consul', although 'the Company never allowed any such officer there' and his presence being likely to prove of 'dangerous consequence', it was resolved to disown him.<sup>5</sup> This decision was conveyed to the Earl of Winchilsea, the ambassador, and he, in June 1664, wrote to the younger Bendysh revoking his commission to act as consul.<sup>6</sup> Thus the second attempt which had been made to establish an English consulate in Egypt came to an end.

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1652-3, pp. 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> Thevenot, ii, p. 806. He also speaks of English merchants residing at Alexandria at this time, i, pp. 381-2.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Sept. 22, 1658. Thurloe, vi, p. 570.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 112. Company to Winchilsea, Oct. 21, 1661; *H.M.C. Finch*, i, pp. 101, 133.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 152, Sept. 15 and 16, 1663.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 113. Company to Winchilsea, Oct. 8, 1663; S.P. 105. 175. Winchilsea to Bendysh, June 2, 1664. Bendysh must have been the consul whom Frampton found in trouble with the Turkish authorities. He narrates (*Life*, pp. 94-5) that when he visited Egypt (some time between 1660 and 1665), he found that the English consul had been imprisoned by the pasha for refusing to pay a debt which the Turk asserted had been contracted by one of his predecessors many years before, and that by bribing suitable agents he (the chaplain) was able to procure the prisoner's escape. Elsewhere (Stowe MSS. 219, Chandos to Sir John Buckworth, June 12, 1684) it is stated that Bendysh when he fled from Egypt left large debts behind.

## THE EMBASSY AND ITS OCCUPANTS, 1583-1660

ONE of the main interests of the opening period of the Company's history lies in the embassy and its occupants, and in their relations to the merchants whom they represented.

The four immediate successors of Harborne—Edward Barton, Henry Lello, Sir Thomas Glover, and Paul Pindar<sup>1</sup>—were all men who had lived and served the Company in the Levant before they attained to the coveted office at Constantinople. Barton was Harborne's secretary, and had probably gone out with him in 1583, for we know that he was sent to the Barbary states by Harborne in 1584 to register the English capitulations there;<sup>2</sup> and he never returned to England again. He succeeded his master in 1588,<sup>3</sup> but only as agent; it was not until 1591 or 1593 that he obtained the royal commission appointing him ambassador.<sup>4</sup> Lello was sent out by the Company in March 1597 to act as Barton's secretary,<sup>5</sup> and stepped into his shoes a few months later. Sir Thomas Glover's career was a strange one. His father was an Englishman, his mother a Polish woman from Dantzic, and he was born at sea as his parents were sailing to London. In his boyhood he had been sent out to Constantinople and there he lived for many years, adding to the Polish tongue, which he spoke fluently, 'a perfect understanding' of the Turkish language, and a profound knowledge of Turkish laws.<sup>6</sup> He first appears acting

<sup>1</sup> Barton (whose life is in the *D.N.B.*) died in December 1597 (Sanderson, pp. 296-7). Lello left Constantinople on May 24, 1607 (Sanderson, p. 239, note 4). Glover signed his articles with the Company in April 1606 (*S.P.* 103. 72) and he arrived in Turkey in December of that year. Pindar was appointed Nov. 26, 1611, and got to Constantinople in the following December (he was there by the 20th. *S.P.* 97. 6, f. 282; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, p. 265). His letter of recall was dated Jan. 25, 1618, and he named a merchant to act as agent preparatory to leaving in July of that year. But the Turkish government persuaded him to remain, the Levant Company did not appoint his successor until the following year, and it seems that he did not leave Constantinople until about April 1620, when Sir John Eyre arrived (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1617-19, pp. 254, 273-4, 284; 1619-21, p. 258).

<sup>2</sup> Harborne's letter of instructions to him dated Aug. 3, 1588, is in Tanner MSS. lxxix, f. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1581-91, p. 536, says 1591, but Hakluyt (vi, pp. 94-5) gives 1593, and in Sanderson, p. 10, he is still spoken of as agent in 1592.

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 166-7.

<sup>5</sup> Lithgow, p. 118; Sanderson, p. 225.



as Barton's secretary<sup>1</sup> before Lello's arrival, and after 1599 he served Lello in the same capacity.<sup>2</sup> But he was in England in 1606 and it was during the summer of that year that he was knighted<sup>3</sup> and appointed to succeed to the embassy. Pindar had spent fifteen years in Venice before he moved to Turkey.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that he went out to Turkey with Lello, for when first we meet him in 1559 he was acting as Lello's secretary.<sup>5</sup> But Lello sent him back to England in that year with a letter from the grand sultana to Queen Elizabeth,<sup>6</sup> and for some reason or other he did not return to Constantinople. In 1600 he petitioned the queen to appoint him consul at Venice,<sup>7</sup> and, although the request was not granted, he was back in the city of the lagoons by 1602,<sup>8</sup> though his visit was apparently a short one.<sup>9</sup> The Levant Company appointed him consul at Aleppo in 1606,<sup>10</sup> and he remained there until 1610 or 1611.<sup>11</sup> By the autumn of 1611 he was in London, 'a person of growing importance and very dear to Lord Salisbury, with whom he has long interviews';<sup>12</sup> and in November of that year he was appointed to succeed Glover at Constantinople.

Barton's efforts to persuade the sultan to join England in the Spanish war, and to mediate peace between the Turks and the emperor, lie outside the scope of this work, but they contributed to establish the high prestige and influence which the young Englishman acquired at the Porte by his firmness and ability.<sup>13</sup> He successfully resisted the efforts of the French and the Venetians to displace him and ruin English trade, and he left his countrymen more firmly established in Turkey than ever. Of his character the evidence is conflicting. Sanderson, a somewhat jaundiced witness who had quarrelled with him, says that he was given over 'to

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 11, Purchas, viii, p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, pp. 188-9; Dallam, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> He was knighted July 19 or Aug. 17, at Hampton Court (Shaw, ii, p. 140).

<sup>4</sup> *D.N.B.* Pindar started life as an apprentice to an Italian merchant settled in England who employed him as his agent in Venice (Nichols, T., *Progresses of James I*, iv, p. 611, note 9).

<sup>5</sup> Sanderson, pp. 181-2; Dallam, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Sanderson, p. 184. Pindar complained bitterly because neither the queen nor the Company would pay the expenses of his journey (*H.M.C. Salisbury*, x, pp. 249, 334).

<sup>7</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, x, p. 462.

<sup>8</sup> Sanderson, p. 222.

<sup>9</sup> *H.M.C. Salisbury*, xii, p. 442.

<sup>10</sup> S.P. 105. 143. Pindar was appointed Nov. 6, 1606.

<sup>11</sup> He was still there in Oct. 1610 (Sanderson, p. 270).

<sup>12</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, p. 202.

<sup>13</sup> He was only thirty-four when he died. Sanderson (p. 166) wrote of the 'extraordinary credit' which Barton enjoyed at the Porte,

badnes stoutly and much wine', as well as to women,<sup>1</sup> but Fynes Moryson painted a more favourable picture. 'He was courteous, and affable, of good stature, corpulent, faire complexion and a full cheereful countenance'; a man of good life, constant in the profession of the reformed religion; and his skill in their tongue, which he spoke fluently, won for him the respect of the Turks.<sup>2</sup> His successor, 'the leane knight' Sir Henry Lello,<sup>3</sup> was not cast in so resolute a mould, and he was accused of damaging English influence by a timidity ill-suited to the atmosphere of Stamboul, where a touch of the Gascon was a decided asset. His want of spirit and courage, it was said, had made the merchants 'to hange the heade and blushe at the open reproaches and scornes of th'other nations'; and his bearing in the presence of the sultan evoked contemptuous ridicule. He 'satt upon his horse with a ruddie downe looke as though he had bine streyninge at a close-stoole; and when he came before the Grand Signor stooode with his hands handsomelie before him like a modest midwife and began a tremblinge spech in Inglishe, as you knowe sounding like the squekinge of a goose divided into semiquavers.'<sup>4</sup>

Glover, who was a much more assertive and flamboyant individual, was in no danger of falling into this mistake. He appeared before the sultan with a brave array of gold lace and jewels and bore himself with a haughty courage which never failed him.<sup>5</sup> 'That red boar of an English ambassador,' as the capitan pasha called him, could never be dragooned by oriental insolence, and in all disputes he stood up to the grand vizier with a cool fearlessness which, if on more than one occasion it brought threats of imprisonment upon his head, won him also respect and power.<sup>6</sup> He seems indeed to have been a hot-tempered man with a genius for quarrelling, for he had not been ambassador for many weeks before he was engaged in a comprehensive dispute with the grand vizier, the French ambassador, the Venetian bailo and his predecessor Lello, who had not yet left Constantinople, arising out of the question of foreign consulage. He lost his temper—and his manners—with the vizier, dismissed the bailo as a double-faced villain because he tried to mediate and keep the peace, and without

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 10.      <sup>2</sup> Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>3</sup> He was not knighted until his return to England (Jan. 21, 1608). Biddulph (Purchas, viii, p. 259) described Lello as 'a learned, wise and religious gentleman, sometime student in Oxford and afterwards at the Innes of Court'. He speaks also of Lello's religious courage and unspotted life.

<sup>4</sup> Sanderson, pp. 225, 242.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 242-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1603-10, pp. 490, 497, 505.

a particle of evidence accused Lello of conspiring with the French ambassador to murder him.<sup>1</sup> But in spite of his vehement and irascible temper Glover filled his office well, and his contemporaries all praised his firm and resolute handling of the Turks, and his efforts to liberate Englishmen enslaved in the Levant.<sup>2</sup>

He was recalled by order of King James in 1611 on purely political grounds.<sup>3</sup> The principality of Moldavia was at that time being contested between a Turkish protégé, and a Prince Constantine who possessed the support of Poland. But a third pretender appeared, calling himself Prince Stephen, who after various wanderings arrived in London; and King James, pitying him, gave him letters to Glover ordering the ambassador to solicit the Porte for his recognition and establishment as Prince of Moldavia. Some money was also advanced to further his cause.<sup>4</sup> Glover received the prince into his house for two years, incurred great expense, and adopted his cause with customary vehemence. To prevent his success, the Turkish candidate, who was then in possession of the principality, bribed the grand vizier and other officials of the Porte, and Glover was soon immersed in a bitter quarrel with the Turkish ministers. The vizier threatened to send him to England in chains, but Sir Thomas boldly refused to surrender the Moldavian, knowing that it was designed to make away with him; and when the vizier collected some janissaries to seize him by force, he found the ambassador's house fortified and garrisoned by his servants and those of Prince Stephen, and ready to defend itself. Such defiance naturally annoyed the Turks; and the Poles, who felt that Glover's championing of Stephen was prejudicial to the interests of their own candidate, Constantine, made several protests at London about his conduct. He seems also to have incurred the suspicion of favouring Spain too much, perhaps because of some services which he had done for the viceroys of Sicily and Naples; but it was mainly because of the unfortunate results of his over-generous advocacy of Prince Stephen's cause that he was recalled.<sup>5</sup> He certainly returned to England under

<sup>1</sup> See the full account in Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, pp. 86-90.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, pp. 242-3; Sandys, p. 85; Lithgow, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 110. Company to Pindar, Nov. 27, 1611: 'It has pleased the King to recall Glover.'

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 458. there had been some negotiations for a marriage between the prince and the unfortunate Arabella Stuart.

<sup>5</sup> Knolles, ii, p. 902; Sandys, p. 85; Lithgow, p. 117; Sanderson, p. 253; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1607-10, pp. 183, 321, 329-30; 1610-13, pp. 252, 265.

a cloud of displeasure, but nothing daunted. We catch a glimpse of him passing through Italy 'like a comet, all in crimson velvet and beaten gold';<sup>1</sup> and then, in spite of anticipations, he appeared in London with a bold and confident air ready to answer all charges against him. He was heard by the council, before whom he spoke 'most eloquently', and, triumphantly clearing himself of all accusations, was soon in great esteem with the king. In 1614 he was granted the office of collector of fines in ecclesiastical causes for life; when Pindar was recalled he was again a candidate for the embassy; and in 1621 he was appointed consul at Algiers, but never took up the appointment.<sup>2</sup> Then he disappears from the records.

Pindar was a less impetuous character with more of the quiet, shrewd business man in his make-up. He was 'a sensible, wise jentellman-like man'<sup>3</sup> who enjoyed much credit at Constantinople, and he was recalled only because the term of his appointment had expired and because, as we have seen, bad trade and Turkish extortion had determined the Company to suppress the embassy for the time being and leave only an agent at Constantinople. On his return to England he was knighted (July 10, 1620) and he survived for another thirty years, a prominent figure in London mercantile society. The wealth which he had amassed in the Levant enabled him to lend large sums to the exchequer, to send generous help to the king when the civil war broke out, and, in 1632, to give £19,000 to the repair of St. Paul's cathedral. That he was a man of culture is proved by the collection of Arabic and Persian MSS. which he presented to the Bodleian Library.<sup>4</sup>

Of Sir John Eyre, who succeeded Pindar, little is known,<sup>5</sup> but it does not appear that he had been in the Company's service or had resided in the Levant and his appointment was probably, to that extent, a departure from the precedent hitherto followed. He was elected by the Company on August 1, 1619, received the royal commission on December 14, and was in Constantinople by April

<sup>1</sup> Birch, i, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Winwood, iii, pp. 418, 428-9; Birch, i, p. 234; ii, p. 180; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, pp. 170, 175, 494; S.P. 105, 148, Nov. 27, 1621.

<sup>3</sup> Sanderson, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> Pindar died in 1650. His life is in the *D.N.B.* See also Lloyd, D., *Memoirs of Excellent Personages*, p. 632.

<sup>5</sup> Was he the man with whom Lord Herbert of Cherbury fought his famous duel? If so, he may have owed his appointment to royal favour, for his wife had a place at court. He seems to have been knighted on March 23, 1604/5 (Shaw ii, p. 137).

1620, when he had his first interview with the grand vizier.<sup>1</sup> But within twelve months he became involved in a heated dispute with the Company over the payment of his salary. Lello, like Barton, had been paid 3,000 chequins a year,<sup>2</sup> but Glover, perhaps because of the reconstruction of the Company in 1605, was able to make better terms. He was paid £300 for the expenses of the voyage out, £200 for the purchase of plate, 1,000 chequins towards the cost of his ceremonial visits after arrival, 3,000 chequins per annum, and he was also allowed 2 per cent. consulage in and out on all goods bought and sold in Constantinople and the Archipelago.<sup>3</sup> This was altered in 1610, when it was resolved to allow him a yearly salary of 3,400 chequins and the consulage paid by the Dutch, estimated at a further 1,000 chequins per annum.<sup>4</sup> Pindar's articles with the Company contained a different arrangement. He was given 7,000 chequins out of which he had to pay the expenses of the voyage to Turkey, equip his household and provide presents for the sultan. His annual allowance was fixed at 4,000 chequins per annum and the Dutch consulage. If the latter ceased (as it did almost immediately) the Company undertook to pay him another 1,000 chequins per annum in recompense.<sup>5</sup> Similar terms were made with Sir John Eyre, who was given 5,000 chequins per annum and the customary allowances for travelling and plate;<sup>6</sup> but he soon complained that the sum was inadequate and that the Company had not paid him half-yearly in advance as had been stipulated, and he recouped himself by seizing consulage from the factory at Constantinople with some severity, to the value of £3,000 more than was owing to him. The Company thereupon complained of his conduct to the king, and in July 1621 John Chapman was sent out to Constantinople with letters of recall for Eyre,<sup>7</sup> and orders to remain there as agent until a new ambassador was appointed. The privy council, however, ruled that as the Company had technically broken its agreement with Eyre by not paying his salary to time, and as he had been revoked

<sup>1</sup> His commission is in S.P. 103. 72; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1619-21, p. 245; Birch, ii, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, p. 194. The chequin was worth about 9s. 6d.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 103. 72. Articles of agreement between the Company and Glover, April 13, 1606.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 109, f. 44.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 143; S.P. 105. 143. Pindar's articles with the Company dated Sept. 27, 1611.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1619-23, p. 413.

<sup>7</sup> His letter of recall was dated July 9. There is a copy in S.P. 97. 8, f. 43.

before his contract of service had expired, he should be allowed to keep the consulage he had seized.<sup>1</sup> Eyre was also accused of speaking slightly of the king, but his successor, Sir Thomas Roe, could find evidence of nothing more serious than a little foolish bragging: 'vanities and slipperynesses as if he had had great privacy with his majestie.'<sup>2</sup>

In Sir Thomas Roe, who was elected to the embassy in July 1621 and arrived at Constantinople during the following December,<sup>3</sup> the Company secured the services of an abler man than any who had yet served it in that capacity. The new ambassador already possessed a close acquaintance with the atmosphere of an oriental court, acquired during his great mission to India, and at Stamboul he soon won the respect and confidence of the Turks and became the 'Elchi' of his time.<sup>4</sup> Under his protection the English merchants enjoyed a peace and security such as they had not had for several years, and the Levant Company gratefully acknowledged Roe's care for its interests. He was able to renew the capitulations with several valuable additions which removed burdens from the trade of the merchants; an extra customs duty on silk which had been demanded at Aleppo was to cease; only the customary 2 per cent. was to be paid on dollars landed in Turkey, and the 6 per cent. claimed at Scanderoon on goods unloaded there was condemned.<sup>5</sup> Roe's main attention was devoted to diplomatic affairs which do not concern our subject; but he watched with unremitting care over the little community of traders entrusted to his charge, and his prestige at the Porte enabled him to safeguard their privileges with almost unique success.

Like Glover and Eyre, Roe had been appointed for four years,<sup>6</sup> and when his time expired in 1625 he asked to be allowed to return home.<sup>7</sup> The request, which synchronized with the accession of Charles I, was the signal for an attack by the new king upon the Company's right to elect a successor; for the office was a lucrative one, and had attracted the notice of the court cormorants. In addition to the salary attached to it, the sultan allowed all ambas-

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1619-21, p. 512; 1621-3, p. 88; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1619-23, p. 413; Birch, ii, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Roe, pp. 107-9. Eyre left Constantinople in Feb. 1622 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1621-3, p. 225).

<sup>3</sup> Roe, pp. 13-14; Knolles, ii, p. 965.

<sup>4</sup> See the letters of the Venetian bailo (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1626-8, p. 262; 1629-32, p. 187).

<sup>5</sup> Chalmers, ii, pp. 431-62.

<sup>6</sup> Pindar pledged himself to remain in Turkey for five years.

<sup>7</sup> Roe, pp. 376-7; *Fortescue Papers* (Camden Soc.), pp. 204-7.

sadors accredited to his court a yearly sum of £500; and there were numerous perquisites and opportunitites for gain. In early days the ambassador was also permitted to trade, and Lello was said to have cleared from £1,500 to £2,000 per annum in that way,<sup>1</sup> while Glover, in addition to trading, made a rich harvest from his consulage.<sup>2</sup> Pindar as consul at Aleppo 'wilbe rich if God prosper him; for he shoffels lustely,'<sup>3</sup> wrote Sanderson; and his subsequent tenure of the embassy must have enabled him to put the coping stone on the high fortune with which he returned to England.<sup>4</sup> Barton, whom Sanderson described as 'a simple honest too good a felowe to be ether getter or saver', died worth nothing<sup>5</sup> and Glover was said to return to England loaded with debts,<sup>6</sup> but Lello and Pindar certainly made their fortunes. It was naturally a matter of temperament to seize the opportunity, but it is clear that the opportunity was there, and easily captured. In 1615 the Company decreed that the ambassador should henceforth be prohibited from trading,<sup>7</sup> but in spite of this the office remained a profitable one and Roe came home considerably enriched.<sup>8</sup>

The question of the right to appoint to the embassy had never clearly been defined, and it was complicated by the dualism which had from the first attended the ambassador and his functions. The charter of 1605, although it expressly confirmed the Company's power of appointing consuls, made no distinct mention of the ambassador; but it seems clear that the merchants had enjoyed a decisive voice in the election of all the early holders of the office, and that their choice had been confirmed by the crown. On Roe's return, however, the royal favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, determined to secure the position for a creature of his own, Sir Thomas Phillips—a courtier who had no knowledge of the Company's concerns and no extraordinary qualifications to make up for that deficiency. Accordingly, in July 1625, the king wrote to the merchants recommending Phillips as Roe's successor. In reply the Company protested that the royal candidate was incapable of filling the office, and it pleaded its right to elect freely to the post. But Charles persisted, and in October a patent was issued appointing Phillips to take Roe's place. The merchants none the less stood firm, refusing to acknowledge the new ambassador, and a deadlock

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 241.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 241, 248, 254, 270.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>4</sup> In 1639 Pindar's estate was valued at £215,600 (Nichols, T., *Progresses of James I*, iv, p. 611, note 9).    <sup>5</sup> Sanderson, pp. 247, 281.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1610-13, p. 265; Winwood, *Memorials*, iii, pp. 344-5.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 105. 147, Aug. 11, 1615.    <sup>8</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1626-8, p. 76.

ensued which was only broken by the death of Phillips in the spring of 1626.<sup>1</sup>

It was the desire of the Company to retain Roe's services for at least a year or two longer, but after Phillip's death the court at once produced a new candidate in Sir Peter Wyche;<sup>2</sup> and so the dispute continued, though with less acrimony than before, for Wyche was more acceptable than Phillips had been, and the merchants kept up their resistance mainly in the hope of preserving their right to elect against the threatened encroachment of the king. In this they were unsuccessful, and in November 1626 they were compelled to surrender, thinly veiling their submission by presenting three names—one of which was Wyche's—to the king, thereby, as they rather naïvely told Roe, 'leaving the issue to God.'<sup>3</sup> Charles, of course, named his candidate Wyche, who was knighted the following month, and arrived at Constantinople in April 1628.<sup>4</sup> The election proved to be a very important precedent, for although the Company did in the future get back for a brief period its right to choose the ambassador, the office henceforth went, with two exceptions only,<sup>5</sup> to men of rank or diplomatic distinction and not to those who, like the early ambassadors, had served their apprenticeships under the Company in Turkey.

Wyche had lived for many years in Spain, first as a merchant (when he was twice bankrupt) and then as a secretarial assistant in the house of the English ambassador at Madrid; and he was said to have purchased the embassy at Constantinople for £1,000, most of which found its way into the pockets of Buckingham or his relatives. The Venetian bailo at the Porte, though he contrasted Wyche's abilities unfavourably with those of his predecessor Roe, spoke of him as 'a good and wise gentleman' who was well loved by all; and his tenure of office seems to have passed as satisfactorily as it was uneventful of incidents.<sup>6</sup> He asked to be recalled in 1633, and the king at once named Sir Sackville Crowe, formerly treasurer of the navy, to succeed him.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1625-6, pp. 58, 66, 118, 122, 285, 287; 1625-49, pp. 4, 12, 13, 14, 34, 35, 39, 40, 73. The Company protested: 'There is propounded to us Sir Thomas Phillips for that employment, a gentleman to us unknown and altogether inexperienced and unfit as we conceive to manage so great a business'.

<sup>2</sup> He was knighted Dec. 16, 1626 (Shaw, ii, p. 191). His life is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>3</sup> *S.P.* 105. 111. Company to Roe, Nov. 23, 1626.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1628-9, p. 54; Shaw, i, p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. Hussey and Fawkenor.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1626-8, pp. 75, 76, 85; 1628-9, p. 69; 1629-32, p. 187.

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1633-4, p. 291. On his return Wyche was made controller



This time the Company did not dare to challenge Charles's usurpation of its old right of appointment; but Crowe's nomination produced a new controversy which lasted for five years, and it was 1638 before Wyche was relieved and was able to return home.<sup>1</sup> The dispute arose out of a claim, which had first been made by Wyche, that the consulage paid in Turkey by all 'strangers' or foreigners lading goods on English ships or sailing their own vessels under the English flag belonged of right to the crown and not to the Company. The merchants contested this, pointing out that they had always enjoyed the 'strangers consulage' in the past and from 1630 onwards committees of the Company were interviewing Lord Cottington about it.<sup>2</sup> While his articles with the Company were being drawn up Crowe not only raised the issue anew, but got an explicit grant for himself of the proceeds of the strangers' consulage from the king.<sup>3</sup> The merchants refused to surrender their counter-claim, and the squabble dragged on until 1638 when it was shelved for the time by an agreement to postpone the settlement until Wyche's return to England, Crowe undertaking not to touch the consulage in the meantime, and the Company giving him a promise that his interests should not be allowed to suffer.<sup>4</sup> His articles were then signed pledging the Company to pay him 5,000 chequins per annum and £600 towards the expenses of his journey and the provision of his equipment; the royal instructions were issued to him;<sup>5</sup> and the new ambassador at length arrived at his post in October 1638.

In Turkey Crowe managed the affairs of the merchants with ability and resolution, but unfortunately the civil war produced bitter friction between him and the Company. In the long constitutional crisis which preceded it, the government had no time to spare for the settlement of such a minor issue as that of the

of the household and a privy councillor. Clarendon, who calls him 'a very honest plain man', says that 'He gratified Sir Thomas Jermin very liberally for his white staff when the court was very low, and so was made a privy councillor and controller of the household'. He is said to have lent the king £30,000 on the outbreak of the civil war. He died at Oxford, Dec. 1643 (*Wotton, Baronetage of England*, iv, pp. 220-1).

<sup>1</sup> Crowe did not get to Constantinople until Oct. 1638, and Wyche left in May 1639 (*Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1636-9, pp. 466, 544).

<sup>2</sup> Various entries in S.P. 105, 149. S.P. 97. 16. Wyche to Coke, Oct. 30, 1636; July 22, 1637.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 16. King to the Company, July 25, 1636.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 16. Crowe to Sir J. Coke, Aug. 11, 1636; Knolles, ii, p. 62; Epstein, pp. 85-9; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 16. They are dated July 4, 1638.

strangers' consulage, and as time dragged on, bringing no conclusion with it, Crowe became restless and threatened to lay hands upon the consulage which was lying in the possession of the treasurer at Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> In hopes of preventing this the Company decided in May 1642 to petition the House of Commons to forbid the ambassador to meddle with the strangers' consulage,<sup>2</sup> and the parliamentary ordinance of 1644 expressly recognized its right to the disputed money. But by now political feeling had widened the breach, for Crowe was a royalist in his sympathies, and the knowledge that the Company leaned towards parliament and had had recourse to it in order to secure its right to the consulage confirmed him in his resolution to seize the money which had been collected at Constantinople. The merchants pointed out with some truth that their trade was so diminished that they could not carry on without the strangers' consulage, but Crowe was obdurate and detained it in his own hands.<sup>3</sup> In 1645 new fuel was added to the dispute by the bankruptcy of John Wolfe, the Company's treasurer at Constantinople. His debts, so Crowe asserted, were public ones, due to the heavy expenses of present giving and of *avansas* which he had been compelled to meet, and in order to extinguish this national liability the ambassador levied 110,950 dollars on the factories at Constantinople and Smyrna. The Company, however, asserted that most of Wolfe's debts were due to loans which Crowe had made to the treasurer at high rates of interest, and were therefore private and not national in character.

As a royalist the ambassador was naturally suspect in England, and the seizure of some letters of his to the king in 1644 promising to execute Charles's orders in spite of the rebellious sentiments of the factory at Constantinople, had already led parliament to contemplate replacing him by a new agent. It was therefore easy for the Company to raise a storm against him when the dispute over Wolfe's debts arose, and not only was there new talk of recalling him, but his property in England was sequestrated because of the royalist inclinations he had shown. The Company disavowed any responsibility for this last step, but none the less Crowe blamed it, and in 1646, to recoup himself, he ordered the seizure of all goods and money belonging to the merchants in Turkey. When the factors resisted he applied to the grand vizier for help, and he,

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Crowe, March 19, 1640/1.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 150, May 11, 1642.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to Crowe, July 31, 1645.

scenting a quarrel which with right handling could be made to yield a rich profit, willingly gave it. Accordingly the entire factory at Constantinople and some of the principal merchants from Smyrna were imprisoned in the ambassador's house. Then the bribery competition upon which the vizier had counted began, and the Turkish officials, who clearly held the scales between the contending parties, reaped a rich harvest. Crowe spent 70,000 dollars, but the Company had the longer purse, and when it had distributed 200,000 dollars it was hardly surprising that the Turks became 'cold and faint' towards the ambassador's cause. First the factors secured their release, and promptly put themselves under the protection of the Dutch agent Coppes. Then they got an order from the sultan that Crowe was no longer to exercise any authority over them; and finally, as the infallible backsheesh did its work, the leader they had chosen for themselves—John Lancelot—was invested and received by the vizier as ambassador until a new one arrived.

At home, meanwhile, the Company, backed by parliament, had petitioned the king (now a prisoner) against the 'cruelties and tyrannies' of Crowe, and had secured his reluctant consent to the ambassador's recall.<sup>1</sup> Charles also voluntarily recognized the right of the merchants to the strangers' consulage.<sup>2</sup> In January 1647 Crowe's successor, Sir Thomas Bendysh,<sup>3</sup> was appointed with the consent of the king and of both houses<sup>4</sup> and he arrived at Constantinople in the following September.<sup>5</sup> He found that Crowe had tried to discredit him in advance by saying that he had no commission from the king; and the old ambassador refused to relinquish his position, claiming to have letters from Charles confirming him in his post, though the factors said they were forgeries. The Turks, taking full advantage of these lucrative complications,

<sup>1</sup> Whitelock, *Memorials*, ii, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to consul Wilde, Smyrna, Feb. 6, 1646/7.

<sup>3</sup> Second baronet of Steeple Bumpstead, Essex. In March 1643 he was imprisoned in the Tower by the house of commons for publishing a royalist proclamation against the associating of the counties of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, &c., by parliament (*Journals of the H. of C.* ii, p. 1002). In August 1644 he was fined £800 and given leave to travel in any of the western plantations. In the meantime he was to have the liberty of the lines of communication and twenty miles about provided that he did not return to Essex (*Cal. for Committee of Compounding*, pt. ii, p. 847). In June 1646 these restraints were taken off (*Lords Journals*, viii, p. 396). See also Lloyd, *Memoirs of Excellent Personages*, p. 559.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 111. Company to John Lancelot, Jan. 28, 1646/7. Company to consul and factory, Smyrna, Feb. 6, 1646/7; Nicholas Papers, I, pp. 77-8.

<sup>5</sup> On Sept. 26. *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1647-52, p. 21.

made Bendysh pay heavily before he was recognized and received as the rightful occupant of the embassy.<sup>1</sup> Then at length the end came. On November 23, Crowe was suddenly seized in his own house, dragged down the stairs with insults and blows, and without being given time to dress properly or to see his wife and children, was hurried on board ship, and dispatched to England where he was at once thrown into the Tower. There he remained until 1656, and throughout the whole period of the Protectorate he and the Company were engaged in fruitless lawsuits against each other arising out of their claims and counter-claims for battery, assault and imprisonment on his part and for the consularage withheld on the side of the merchants.<sup>2</sup>

Bendysh, by his 'high spirit', soon won 'a great place' for himself at Constantinople and was highly esteemed by the Turks;<sup>3</sup> but the opening years of his embassy were troublesome ones. The factory at Constantinople was torn by a spirit of faction which the unedifying struggle with Crowe had done nothing to assuage, and the new ambassador was soon drawn into the heated squabbles of the factors. By 1650 divisions had become so acute that he was forbidding members of the factory to attend meetings, seizing their estates, and even sending some of them home as prisoners, while they contemplated repudiating his authority and setting up a new agent of their own. The Company, 'wearied with the continual dissensions', blamed both sides, Bendysh for taking sides and so provoking opposition, and the factors for 'giving him affronts in public and with such pertinence and scorn as have provoked him to such rigid courses as tends both to his own trouble and yours'.<sup>4</sup>

Much of the trouble was due to the suspicion that Bendysh had royalist sympathies, and this also rendered him suspect in the eyes of the new republican régime at home after 1649. He retained the

<sup>1</sup> The whole episode cost the Company £80,000. *Short Reasons in behalf of the Levant Company*.

<sup>2</sup> For the whole episode see Rycaut, *Continuation of Knolles*, ii, p. 62. 74; Abbott, *Turkey, Greece, &c.*, pp. 93-4; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1643-7, pp. 269, 273-4, 292; 1647-52, 14, 16-20-2, 27-9. Crowe's wife was treated with equal severity, and compelled to embark for England at two days' notice. Crowe died in 1683 (Burke, *Extinct Baronetage*, p. 143).

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1659-61, p. 123. It was said that on one occasion when the grand vizier tried to affront him by moving the chair provided for the ambassador out of the room, Bendysh made one of his attendants kneel down and lean upon his hands, and then sat down upon his back before he would begin the interview (Burke, *Extinct Baronetage*, p. 56).

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1650, pp. 41-3, 189, 225, 227.

title of 'his majesty's ambassador'; he was obviously reluctant to correspond with the new council of state; it was even said that his chaplain prayed for the king's restoration; and only preoccupation with the settlement of the new régime in England postponed the determination to recall him until 1652. That decision was not wholly due to Bendysh's alleged disaffection, for the Company's trade was in such a parlous condition that it was felt to be imperative, in order to cut down expenses, to replace the ambassador by an agent. Accordingly Major Richard Salway was chosen in 1652 to succeed Bendysh in the embassy, but it was understood that the appointment was not to become effective until trade had revived; in the meantime Major Richard Lawrence was sent out with Bendysh's letters of revocation and was ordered to remain in Constantinople as agent at a salary of 4,000 dollars per annum until Salway appeared.<sup>1</sup> The end of the Dutch war seemed to open up brighter prospects, and in 1654 Cromwell approved of Salway as the next holder of the embassy,<sup>2</sup> and preparations were made for his departure. But meanwhile Lawrence had found that Bendysh, imitating Crowe, flatly refused to surrender his office. He would not secure an audience with the sultan and vizier for the new agent, pretending that it would be dishonourable for them to receive any one who was not accredited as ambassador; he told the Turks that there was no settled authority in England and that since Lawrence's arrival the government had again been changed; and in short threw every possible obstacle in his way.<sup>3</sup> In thus defying the home authorities the ambassador was supported not only by being in possession and by his record of efficient service, but also by the reluctance of the Company to recall him at Crom-

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Sept. 1 (?), 1652, Jan. 21, 1652/3; *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1653-4, pp. 10, 55, 123, 137; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1651-2, p. 49; 1653-4, pp. 123, 148; *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 96; S.P. 105. 112. Company to Bendysh, Dec. 5, 1651. Richard Salway (1615-85) had sat in the long parliament (for Appleby 1645), fought for parliament at the siege of Worcester (1646), and was a member of the council of state during the Commonwealth. (See his life in the *D.N.B.*) Richard Lawrence had also fought in the parliamentary armies. In the *D.N.B.* he is spoken of as a colonel, but in the papers relating to his mission to Constantinople he is referred to as major only. Little is known of his early life, but in a Paper 'concerning Major Lawrence, his going agent for Constantinople' in S.P. 97. 17 (undated), it is questioned 'whether a person who has been a purser and surgeon of a ship and is well known in Turkey to be a sailor's son can represent the Republic there with honour'.

<sup>2</sup> *H.M.C. 10th Report*, Appendix, part iv, p. 410. Cromwell to the Levant Company, Aug. 14, 1654.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 17. Lawrence to the Protector, July 4, 1654.

well's behest, and by the anxiety of everybody to prevent a repetition of the disastrous scenes which had closed Crowe's embassy. In the end therefore he was victorious. Owing to the death of a friend, the charge of whose estate had fallen upon him, Salway begged to be excused from going out in February 1655, and though the Company presented William Garraway to the Protector as a substitute in the following month, the matter was not pushed;<sup>1</sup> Lawrence was recalled in May 1656;<sup>2</sup> and in September 1658 new articles between Bendysh and the Company were signed for a further period of five years.<sup>3</sup> After that, he was left undisturbed until the Restoration.

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 151; Feb. 8, 1655; March 8, 1655.

<sup>2</sup> *H.M.C. Laing*, i, p. 300. Cromwell's letter of recall, May 28, 1656.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Sept. 27, 1658.

## VI

### THE CENTRAL PERIOD OF THE COMPANY'S HISTORY, 1660-1718

THE Restoration came just in time to check the failing fortunes of the Company and to permit of a successful re-establishment of order and discipline. In August 1660 the merchants petitioned the king for a confirmation of their charter with certain additions in order to secure their privileges and allow of necessary reforms in the future;<sup>1</sup> and on April 2, 1661, a new charter was issued to the Company, under which it traded until its dissolution in 1825. It renewed the rights granted by King James I in 1605 and added several new clauses. Power was now given to levy double duties on aliens trading within the Company's monopoly under the English flag; English subjects in the Levant who refused to obey the judicial authority of the Company's agents might be transported home for punishment; and the administering of an oath to all factors and ships' captains to make a true entry of goods consigned to them or carried by them was sanctioned. The right to vote at the election of the Company's officers was henceforth limited to those members who in the previous twelve months had traded and paid impositions to the value of at least 40 shillings to the Company. A more restrictive clause—and one that evoked much criticism and discontent in the future—forbade all persons, other than noblemen and gentlemen of quality who resided in London or within a radius of twenty miles from it to be admitted to membership, unless they first became freemen of the city.<sup>2</sup> The result of this was to put all those who desired to trade, and who were not freemen, to a considerable additional expense in taking up the freedom, and in consequence to narrow the basis of the Company.<sup>3</sup>

The announcement of the king's determination to recall Sir Thomas Bendysh from Constantinople—which came in the summer of 1660—was less palatable to the Company in view of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> The Company was not responsible for this new clause. It was ordered to be put into the charter by the privy council as the result of a petition to the king by the lord mayor and common council of London, protesting that many merchants were trading from London and refusing to take up the freedom of the city and with it their fair share of the burden of its administration (S.P. 105. 144, p. 253).

<sup>3</sup> Macpherson, ii, p. 494.

expense which a change of ambassador always entailed, and it petitioned that Bendysh might be allowed to retain the embassy. But the king refused the request; and the successor whom he recommended to the merchants at first increased their dislike of the change. This was Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea, the first man of noble rank to hold the office.<sup>1</sup> To the Company the honour of such exalted representation was swamped by the fear that greater expenses would be involved, and Winchilsea's inexperience of business, together with his character, seemed to render him entirely unsuited to the position. He was, reported the Venetian ambassador in London, 'a young man full of idle talk, informed about many things, but not very steady; rather inclined to be light and volatile like the climate of the country';<sup>2</sup> but the earl's jovial exterior and fluent tongue served him in good stead in Turkey. 'Having a goodly person and mustachios, with a world of talk and that all (as his way was) of mighty wonders' he won the friendship and favour of the powerful grand vizier Achmet Kiuprili;<sup>3</sup> and his flippant exterior concealed both the ambition and the ability to exploit the opportunities thus presented. He chafed against the limitations of his position which made him 'little better than a grand factor for the merchants', and longed to try his talents in the realms of diplomacy, and when the merchants closed their purse strings to his projects his proud spirit revolted against their narrow outlook and their reprimands. 'I protest,' he wrote, 'that some times their letters runne in such a stile as a tutour or guardian would scarce correct his pupil with in the yeares of his minoritie.'<sup>4</sup> But despite these squabbles Winchilsea worked hard for the Company, and it gratefully acknowledged in 1666 that he had 'revived a dying trade';<sup>5</sup> while the fact that he angled after a second tenure of the embassy in 1676 would seem to prove that the position was not wholly a distasteful one.<sup>6</sup> If it cramped his ambition it certainly profited his pocket, which had been one of the chief motives prompting him to take the office. He went out on a five years' agreement, and hoped in that time to restore his fortunes. The piece of eight, or Spanish dollar, had steadily superseded the Venetian chequin as the predominant standard of value in the Levant, and Bendysh's

<sup>1</sup> Winchilsea was recommended by the king, June 25, 1660 (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 65). His life is given in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1659-61, pp. 168-9.

<sup>3</sup> North, *Lives*, iii, pp. 36-7. Evelyn (Aug. 4, 1669) calls Winchilsea 'a prodigious talker'.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 357, 361.

<sup>5</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, pp. 317-20.

<sup>6</sup> Stowe MSS. 745, f. 111.



salary was fixed at 10,000 dollars per annum.<sup>1</sup> Winchilsea was also paid 10,000 Spanish dollars,<sup>2</sup> but in addition the Company gave him each year a gratuity of another 2,000 dollars. He was forbidden to trade and had to surrender any claims to foreign consular, but there still remained various other channels of gain,<sup>3</sup> and the earl was soon able to send home £1,000 per annum to be saved.<sup>4</sup>

Vigorous steps were now taken by the Company to restore its authority over the factors in the Levant. Orders were sent out to the ambassador and the various consuls strictly to enforce on all factors and captains the oath of true entries. Those who refused to take it were not to be employed in future, and any member consigning goods through such an agent was to forfeit 20 per cent. of their value.<sup>5</sup> At Smyrna the new oath met at first with some resistance, but the Aleppo factors readily submitted to it.<sup>6</sup> The consuls were also instructed to prevent factors from overcharging their principals in London on customs duties and to stop strangers' goods from being 'coloured', or passed without paying the appointed dues.<sup>7</sup> To ensure this last the Company secured from the king a revival of its former privilege—which had been allowed to lapse during the civil war period—of stationing an agent in the customs house to sign all bills of entries relating to the Levant.<sup>8</sup> The treasurers in the factories were obliged from now onwards to give bonds or sureties to the value of £500 that they would not disburse the Company's money except for customary charges and avanias, and their accounts were to be audited by the factory and returned to London every six months.<sup>9</sup> These measures, backed by the firm hand of Winchilsea at Constantinople, and by the new force and energy which the Restoration had given to the Company at home soon succeeded in stamping out the abuses of the previous period, and with the return of order and discipline trade rapidly revived.

The coping stone was placed upon the work of rehabilitation

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 150, Jan. 19, 1646/7. The dollar was worth about 5s.

<sup>2</sup> Winchilsea's articles of agreement with the Company are in *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 270. Dated Sept. 19, 1660.

<sup>3</sup> See later, pp. 134-5.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 5; *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, pp. 491-2.

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1667-8, pp. 402-3.

<sup>8</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 195. Every merchant entering goods at the Customs House had to deliver to the Company's officer there one of his bills of entry (S.P. 105, 152, March 10, 1663/4).

<sup>9</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, pp. 591-2; 1667-8, p. 577.

when Sir John Finch<sup>1</sup> journeyed to Adrianople and secured the renewal of the English capitulations with several additions in 1675. It proved to be the last time that this was done, and for the remainder of its existence the Company traded under the charter and the capitulations as they were fixed in Charles II's reign. The new articles to which Finch secured the sanction of Mohammed IV were designed to remedy defects which experience had revealed in the earlier grants. Two of them regulated the manner in which the 3 per cent. duty on imports and exports at Aleppo and Smyrna was to be paid. This had been a fruitful source of friction with the Turkish customs officials, especially at Smyrna where the Company had begun to import finer cloth than formerly, but claimed to pay only the same duty as it had done on the earlier coarser materials sent out. Success on this point, according to Finch's estimate, saved 60,000 dollars a year, and gave his countrymen a great advantage over the Dutch, who had to pay six dollars per piece whereas the English now paid only two on cloth of equal fineness. Other clauses protected the English factors from extortion when they were engaged in litigation in the Turkish law courts; established uniformity of anchorage dues throughout the Levant ports; and permitted the use of Christian witnesses against Moslems who were renegade Christians. This last arose out of a recent case in Smyrna of an English factor who had robbed his principals and then turned Mohammedan to defend himself, because the evidence of a Giaour was not permitted against any True Believer. Finch also tried to win for his royal master the coveted title of Padishah, or emperor, which was accorded only to the King of France at the Sublime Porte; but this was refused. As some compensation for his disappointment, however, the Turks, on their own initiative, added a far more valuable article to the capitulations. Hitherto the export of figs, raisins, and currants from Asia Minor had been strictly prohibited, but the English were now authorized to lade two ships yearly with them, ostensibly for the use of the King of England. By a grant dated September 1, 1676, Charles II relinquished this right in favour of the Levant Company.<sup>2</sup> For a long time the limitation thus imposed on the trade by the Turks seems to have been respected, but after the Napoleonic wars it either fell into oblivion or was dropped and the imports of Smyrna raisins rose sharply.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ambassador 1672-81.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 110. 68, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> For Finch's negotiations see Abbott, *Under the Turk*, chaps. ii, x, xi. The

The situation in the Levant was favourable for the recovery of the Company's trade after 1660, for all the Franks enjoyed an unusual respite from the extortion which the Turks so often practised at their expense. During the period 1661-76 the Turkish government was controlled by the grand vizier Achmet Kiuprili, a statesman of unblemished integrity, who dispensed equal justice to Turk and Frank and protected the foreign merchants from the rapacity of local officials.

Added to this there was for the time being no serious competition to be encountered. The Venetians now retained only a shadow of their former trade and were negligible as rivals.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch were more formidable, and in the days of the Protectorate had threatened to win supremacy in the Levant market; but they never carried out more than 6,000-7,500 pieces of cloth per annum, and their trade was mainly concentrated at Smyrna.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiads still continued to be written about their progress in the decade after the Restoration, but in fact they had passed their zenith and during the next forty years their trade declined rapidly. With the small natural resources of their country they could not hope to compete with the output of England when once it was free to devote its whole attention to commerce; and their geographical position placed their trade at the mercy of the island kingdom. The navigation acts of 1651 and 1660 and the Anglo-Dutch wars of the next twenty-five years were effective blows to the maritime supremacy of Holland from which she never properly recovered. Moreover the Dutch merchants were naturally inclined to concentrate their attention upon the trade of the East Indies where they had made large conquests, were faced by little competition, and secured larger profits. But the most potent reason for their decline was the increasing absorption of their country in continental politics, which was forced upon it by the aggressions of Louis XIV of France. The war with France (1672-8), which was both preceded and followed by a tariff war with

capitulations are printed in full in Chalmers, vol. ii. The following table illustrates the trade in Smyrna raisins (figures from Customs 3 and 4 in the P.R.O.).

1697-8 official value of raisins imported					£4,918
1700	"	"	"	"	£635
1750	"	"	"	"	£10,362
1824	"	"	"	"	£46,748

<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century the Venetians still retained some trade in luxury goods, such as damasks, silk fabrics, and gold and silver tissues, but most of these were sold at Constantinople. They had a consul at Smyrna, but none at Aleppo, Salonika, and Cairo (Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 379-82).

<sup>2</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 125-6.

the same Power, and then by nine more years of open hostility (1688-97), proved fatal to Dutch trade, which was captured by the English and French. Even in 1666 they had not enough trade at Aleppo to support a consul there,<sup>1</sup> and in 1671 Chardin found that although they drove a great traffic at Smyrna they had little to do elsewhere, and that all their dealings in the other ports of the Levant amounted to little or nothing.<sup>2</sup> A few years later they had only two merchants left at Aleppo, and in 1702 the English Levant Company calculated that Dutch trade in cloth was reduced to half what it had been twenty years before.<sup>3</sup> The prosperity which the English enjoyed in the reign of Charles II was attributable in part to this decline in the commerce of their neighbours and rivals.

Nor had French trade to the Levant yet begun to revive under the inspiration of Colbert. Instead it reached its nadir during this period. In 1671 Smyrna contained a populous French factory, but Chardin wrote of it 'in some years the effects that came out of France consign'd to all those merchants did not amount to above four hundred thousand livres; and there are many that have not above five hundred crowns stock'. Of the other French factories in the Levant he said 'the trade which they drive is so inconsiderable that one merchant in each place might dispatch all the business'.<sup>4</sup> At Constantinople in 1682 there were only four French houses established and scarcely eight or nine ships went there each year from France.<sup>5</sup> Lord Chandos described their merchants as conducting 'a miserable trade—with caps, paper and other such bagatelli', and declared that they appeared abroad as meanly as they lived at home.<sup>6</sup>

For the moment French trade was a danger to the English only from its character and not from its volume. In the sixteen-fifties five-sous pieces of silver began to be imported into the Levant from France. These small handy coins (called *temeens*) soon won the fancy of the Turks and outdistanced in popularity the Spanish piece of eight, the Dutch lion dollar, and all the other foreign currencies which circulated in the trading centres of the Ottoman Empire. As they first changed hands in the Levant at the rate of about 8 to the dollar—although in Marseilles they were not worth more than 17 or 15 to the dollar—they were a profitable speculation; and the French poured them into Turkey until there was a glut and they passed only at 10 to the dollar. Then, to keep up the

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 410.    <sup>2</sup> Chardin, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Chardin, pp. 7-8.    <sup>5</sup> Saint-Priest, pp. 302-3.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 305.

<sup>6</sup> Stowe MSS. 219, f. 86.

profit, they were debased in value by increasing the alloy; and as the traffic proceeded the Italians joined in,<sup>1</sup> and millions of temeens, increasingly debased, were dumped upon the Turks until their value sank to under a twentieth of the dollar. The Levant Company was early aware of the danger which lurked behind this pernicious traffic. Not only did it enable the French, making huge profits on the temeens, to buy more cheaply in the Levant market, but it threatened a rich crop of avanias on all who handled the coins when at length the sultan's government awoke to the magnitude of the evil and moved. Accordingly in June 1668 the factors in Turkey were prohibited from selling any goods except for weighty dollars or from importing or handling any false money; and it was ordered that all money imported on English ships must be weighed on arrival. Any vessel carrying faulty coinage was forbidden to reload at a factory; and the ambassador, Sir Daniel Harvey, Winchilsea's successor, was instructed to express to the Turkish government the king's dislike of the mischievous trade in temeens. Harvey's remonstrances secured a proclamation forbidding the circulation of the new coins; but although the temeens disappeared their place was taken by a new crop of false dollars. In the hope of stopping any of the English factors from indulging in the swindle, and of convincingly dissociating itself from the traffic, the Levant Company ordered that all currency arriving in Turkey on English ships was to be examined by the ambassador or consul in the presence of Turkish officials. The motive was excellent, but its honesty was too transparent to win conviction in an oriental atmosphere. The Turks regarded the procedure as an elaborate cloak beneath which the false money might be imported with impunity; and suspicion mounted to certainty when in 1677 a cargo of 200,000 new Dutch lion dollars arrived at Aleppo on an English convoy. The grand vizier ordered the whole consignment to be seized and tested, and although the dollars proved to be of full weight, it cost 15,000 of them to secure their release.<sup>2</sup>

With no formidable competition to encounter, the Levant Company's trade steadily regained its former volume. The revival can be adequately expressed in figures through the medium of the cloth exports for the period, which form a fair index to the whole trade

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1659 the Company sent a letter to the English traders at Leghorn urging them to ask the Grand Duke of Tuscany to stop the export of the false money coined in Italy to the Levant (S.P. 105. 151, April 1, 1659).

<sup>2</sup> Abbott, *Under the Turk*, chap. xiv; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1667-8, p. 441; 1668-9, p. 101; *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 450; S.P. 105. 152, May 15, 1668.

since they comprised from two- to three-fifths of its total value. In the six years between 1666-71 inclusive 82,032 cloths were exported, which gives an average of 13,672 for each separate year. During the following six years (1672-7) 120,451 cloths were sent out or an approximate average of 20,075 per annum, while the corresponding figures for 1678-83, another series of six years, were 117,914 and 19,652 respectively.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the sixteen-seventies was thus about 6,000 cloths per annum, or nearly half as much again as the total of the preceding period. The annual shipments which produced these averages did not correspond closely to them, but fluctuated widely. Thus in 1670, 29,802 cloths were sent out and 29,868 in 1675;<sup>2</sup> yet the average for the whole six years 1670-5 was only about 19,000. The causes of the variation lay in a general depression of trade between 1672 and 1674 which was accentuated by the Dutch war and the consequent insecurity of merchant shipping, and by the refusal of the government in January 1672 to repay the capital of loans amounting to nearly a million and a half which had been raised among the merchants of the city. This 'stop of the exchequer' deranged the business of London, several great commercial houses failed, and all credit was suspended. The effects of these events on trade were clearly revealed in the customs receipts of the years 1671-4 which showed a reduction of about a third as compared with the figures of 1668.<sup>3</sup>

Towards the close of the decade 1670-80 the period of prosperity which the Company had been enjoying began to cloud over. The depression was probably attributable in part to the renewal of French and Dutch competition after the Peace of Nymwegen and to the effects of the new protective tariffs imposed in France by Colbert, but the Levant merchants fastened upon the activities of the East India Company as the main reason for it, and a formidable attack was launched upon the rival concern in 1680-1. This was backed by the whigs, who hated the Company because of its close dependence on the crown, by the numerous interlopers who were anxious to destroy its monopoly, by the merchants who disliked the export of bullion to the east, which was a normal and essential

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105, 145, p. 308. The total for the period 1671-83 was 238,365 cloths or an average of 19,863 per annum. The figures in Sloane MSS. 2902, f. 118 show how the trade was growing at this period.

	<i>Imports to Turkey</i>	<i>Exports from Turkey</i>
1662-3 . . .	£367,595	£167,661
1668-9 . . .	£466,703	£191,458

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105, 145, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Scott, i, p. 289.

feature of the trade done there, and by the woollen manufacturers who saw in the undermining of the Turkey Company's trade a serious threat to their own industry.<sup>1</sup>

As we have already noticed, quite early in the century the Levant merchants had felt the ill effects of the competition of the East India Company in drugs and spices. In the next fifty years this competition spread from these commodities, which formed only an inconsiderable part of the Levant Company's trade, to raw silk, which comprised about three-quarters of its total volume of imports, and to manufactured silk goods and calicoes. These were purchased not only in India but also in Persia, where the East Indian merchants had factors residing at Basra, Bunder Abbas, and Ispahan. There was a big increase in the imports of Indian raw silk about 1680, and a determined effort had been made in the previous ten years to develop the trade in manufactured silk goods. The Company had even sent out patterns for the Indian weavers to imitate and English weavers and dyers to teach them improved methods. The larger imports of these goods and of Indian calicoes which resulted affected both the English silk and woollen industry by their competition not only at home, but also in the European market where they menaced the old demand for English woollen cloth, and the Levant Company was therefore sure of strong backing when it protested against the activities of its formidable rival. It had first complained in 1670 against the introduction of raw silk from India and Persia and it made intermittent attacks during the next ten years.<sup>2</sup> In 1680 it lodged a complaint in parliament and the matter was considered by a grand committee, but nothing was done to remedy it.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, in August 1681, it presented to the privy council a long and interesting budget of its grievances entitled *The allegations of the Turkey Company and others against the East India Company*.<sup>4</sup>

In this it was stated that the East India Company had exported vast quantities of bullion and in return had imported 'Calicoes, pepper, wrought silks and a deceitful sort of raw silk—calicoes and wrought silks manufactured in India being an evident damage to the poor of this nation and the latter of raw silks an infallible destruction to the Turkey trade, for in regard that Turkey doth not

<sup>1</sup> Scott, ii, pp. 137-8; Khan, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Cawston and Keane, p. 80; Scott, ii, p. 135; Khan, pp. 153-78.

<sup>3</sup> Cawston and Keane, p. 80; Macpherson, ii, pp. 597-8.

<sup>4</sup> Counsel of both bodies were heard by the council on August 27, 1681 (Luttrell, *Brief Relation*, i, p. 119).

yield a sufficient quantity of commodities to return for one-fourth part of our English manufactures exported thither, the remaining ballance which is three-quarters of our trade is wholly poiz'd by raw silks which, if supplied by that of a baser and worse sort out of India, the most considerable part of the Turkey importations and consequently the cloth trade of England must fail'. The East India Company was also accused of having 'sent over into India throwsters, weavers and dyers and actually set up there a manufacture of silk which not only by instructing the Indians in making these manufactures, but by importing them ready made and died into England is an unspeakable impoverishment of the working people of this kingdom who would otherwise be employed therein and to the ruine of many thousands of families here'. In conclusion the king was asked either to give the Levant Company permission to trade into the Red Sea via the Cape of Good Hope, which had been denied to it as infringing the monopoly of the East India Company,<sup>1</sup> or else to dissolve the India Company so that a larger joint stock might be raised and that 'The Turkey Company who by the encroachment of the East India Company upon them have lost or must loose the greatest part of their trade, may have some reparation by partaking of theirs, and that by proviso in the new charter they may be defended by a prohibition of raw silk and wrought silks out of India'.<sup>2</sup>

The East India Company defended itself in an equally lengthy reply to these charges. After advancing several arguments in favour of a joint stock organization—which its opponents had attacked as a restrictive system—it claimed that Indian silks were 'notoriously the strongest and most durable as well as cheapest that come from any part of the world', and that, as they were generally re-exported from England, they did not prejudice the silk manufacture there. It pointed also to the figures for the cloth exports of the Levant Company for the previous ten years as a proof of the groundless nature of the complaints made.<sup>3</sup> In a contemporary pamphlet Sir Josiah Child, the governor of the East India Company, put its case more bluntly:

'The truth of the case at bottom is this: the importation of better

<sup>1</sup> Some members of the Company about 1678-9 had sent a ship to trade at Mocha in Arabia—but the East India Company caused the vessel to be arrested on its return and claimed that her good were forfeited for infringing its charter. It was probably as a result of this case that the Levant merchants were forbidden to trade round the Cape of Good Hope (S.P. 105. 145, p. 109).

<sup>2</sup> *The allegations of the Turkey Co., &c.*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



and cheaper raw silk from India may probably touch some Turkey merchants' profit at present though it doth benefit the kingdom and not hinder the exportation of cloth. What then? Must one trade be interrupted because it works upon another? At that rate there would be nothing but confusion in a nation ad infinitum.'<sup>1</sup>

In the end, no decided action was taken, for the crown consistently backed the East India Company against its critics; and the Turkey merchants were left to face as best they could the competition of the silk which their rivals brought to England more cheaply round Africa than they could hope to import it from the Levant.<sup>2</sup>

This failure to limit the competition of Indian silk was one of several causes which produced a decline in the value of the Levant trade between 1680 and 1688. In Turkey the English suffered severely under the rapacity and truculence of the grand vizier Kara Mustafa (1676-83), who by an organized system of plunder under threats of confiscation, imprisonment, fictitious claims in the law courts, and increased customs duties wrung over 150,000 dollars (about £35,000) out of the English ambassador Sir John Finch<sup>3</sup> and the factors before he became engaged in war with Austria in 1683.<sup>4</sup> Part of the loss fell on individuals, and Finch's successor, Lord Chandos,<sup>5</sup> managed to get some of the money returned, but none the less the Company had twice to suspend its general shipping, and it was obliged to increase the consulage levied on its goods in the Turkish ports in order to raise the money to meet the vizier's demands. The war of 1683 put an end to Kara Mustafa's depredations, but it brought no relief to trade, for with the absence of the court and all the high officials from Constantinople the demand for the finer grades of cloth was seriously affected, and the exhaustion in men and money which the struggle soon produced throughout the Ottoman Empire weakened the market for most English commodities. The letters of Lord Chandos from Constantinople during this period contain many complaints about the badness of trade. In June 1684 he wrote 'it is evident here is a tedious, bloody and dangerous warre cutt out for the Turk on all

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Scott, ii, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Cawston and Keane, pp. 82-3. In 1682 the Company wrote to Chandos (S.P. 105. 114, p. 236), 'wee doe foresee that the trade of silk from thence must necessarily decline of itselfe by reason of the vast quantityes now imported from the East Indyes where it may be bought at half the price it costs in Turkey'.

<sup>3</sup> Finch was sent out to succeed Sir Daniel Harvey who died in 1672.

<sup>4</sup> For a full account of Kara Mustafa's conduct see Abbott, *Under the Turk*, &c., and North, *Lives*.

<sup>5</sup> He arrived out in 1681.

sides of them, which hath had allready (and will have I feare much more yet) a scurvy influence on your trade'.<sup>1</sup> Two years later his fears had been justified. It was 'a sad truth', he declared, 'that the Levant trade decays apace (especially since this warre against Christendome hath been enter'd into by the grand seignior) in all its scales.'<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile French trade had begun to revive, and the foundations were being laid of an expansion which in the following century was to oust the English from their supremacy in the Levant. This development began when Colbert undertook the direction of commercial affairs in 1661. His mission in life was to develop the industry and trade of France, and the Levant became the special object of his care. For twenty-two years he laboured to reform and reorganize the trade with Turkey and at the same time to establish industries in France which could supply the Levant market with French cloth. Vigorous efforts were made to eradicate the abuses which had undermined the efficiency and the honesty of the French factories in the Levant; the authority and duties of all officials were closely defined; through the intendant of Provence the government established a tight hold over the whole trade which was centred at Marseilles; shipbuilding was encouraged by a bounty on tonnage launched; and companies were formed with royal support and extensive privileges to promote the trade.<sup>3</sup> These measures were not all enforced with the precision of a modern statute. Some were ignored and others were successfully defied; some were complete failures; but in the aggregate they did produce great improvements in the management of the Turkey trade. It was, however, pre-eminently Colbert's revival of the French cloth industry which lay at the basis of the reviving prosperity of his countrymen in the Levant by enabling them to supply the market with the commodity most in demand and to compete successfully with the English and Dutch in their own manufactures. Dutch clothiers were settled at Carcassonne and other places in order to teach the inhabitants improved methods; factories were built and given rent free to clothiers; bounties were paid on cloth exported and long credit was given by

<sup>1</sup> Stowe MSS. 219, f. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., f. 249. Scales = ports or harbours.

<sup>3</sup> Four companies were formed before the close of the century; Company of the Levant, 1670; Company of the Levant, 1678; Company of the Mediterranean, 1685; Company of the Mediterranean, 1689. All failed through faulty administration and the preference of the French merchants for individual enterprise rather than for corporate activity.

the government to the exporters. This extensive state assistance, the proximity of large supplies of fine wool in Spain and the shorter distance which the finished product had to traverse to the Levant soon made the French formidable rivals, and their cloth, thinner and more showy than the English, quickly made its way in the Turkish market. Here it was at last able to compete on fair terms, for the Marquis de Nointel, who renewed the French capitulations in 1673, secured the reduction of the customs duty paid by his countrymen to 3 per cent., thereby putting them upon the same basis as the English had enjoyed throughout the century.

The danger was only potential before 1680. Colbert was still engaged in building up the ruins into which the former trade of his country had fallen, and he was hampered in his progress by the war of 1672-8; but steady progress was being made and the outbreak of hostilities in the near east in 1683 played into French hands. Colbert had always advocated the maintenance of friendly diplomatic relations with the Porte as a necessary foundation for successful trade, and the political ambitions of Louis XIV, directed against Austria, strengthened this motive. When, after 1683, the Turks became involved in a desperate struggle with the Empire, Poland, and Venice they naturally turned for sympathy and assistance to the one European power which had preserved common interests and an understanding with them since the days of Suleiman the Magnificent; and the ambassador of France at Constantinople soon resumed his former influence, which had been obscured by a temporary estrangement in Louis XIV's earlier years. This was fully exploited to secure commercial privileges for the merchants of his own country and to assail the trade of the English and the Dutch. In March 1687 the Marquis de Seignelay wrote to Girardin, who was ambassador at the time, that nothing could be of greater importance than to secure a diminution in the trade which the English and Dutch carried on in the Levant; and in 1690 he instructed Girardin's successor Châteauneuf to make the most of the war then raging against England and Holland to secure for France the trade of the Levant.<sup>1</sup>

The adhesion of Venice to the alliance against the Porte was a further advantage to the French. The Venetians had retained most of the carrying trade in corn, rice, and coffee between Egypt and Syria and Constantinople, and a great deal of the coasting trade throughout the Turkish Empire was also in their possession until

<sup>1</sup> *Documents inédits*, iii, p. 651; *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 359.

they declared war in 1684. Then the French quickly stepped in and supplanted them, thus securing a trade which not only gave them big profits, but was also admirably suited to the individualistic character of their shipping.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of these various facts was revealed in a considerable reduction in the volume of the English Levant trade. In 1680 28,771 cloths had been exported and the annual average shipments in the period 1671-83 was 19,863 cloths. In 1685 only 16,282 cloths were sent out and the average for the five years from 1683-8 reached no more than 14,950 cloths, which marked a drop of about 5,000 per annum from the figures for the earlier period.<sup>2</sup> This decline reacted upon the English woollen industry and helped to produce the serious condition which existed in 1686 when all the cloth districts producing for export experienced an acute depression of trade.<sup>3</sup>

The outbreak of war with France in May 1689 further increased the Levant Company's difficulties and hampered its trade more than any previous event (save the civil war) had done. Ships destined for Turkey were now exposed to attack on every mile of the journey not only from corsairs but also from the French navy, which was sufficiently powerful in the early days of the war to challenge the united forces of England and Holland and to defeat them in 1690 at the battle of Beachy Head. The Channel and the Mediterranean swarmed with French privateers and Brest and Toulon became the bases of great fleets which lay across the route to Turkey, so that it was no longer possible to dispatch convoys of merchant ships under the protection of two or three third-rate men-of-war. Powerful squadrons were necessary to ensure the safety of all shipping, and the Levant Company was obliged to regulate the sailing of its vessels according to the ability of the admiralty to provide adequate naval convoys. This ability was at first very limited, for not only were all available ships needed in the main fleet to enable it to withstand the French, but the war in Ireland and the necessity for convoying troops both there and to the Netherlands made large drains upon the resources of the navy, and naturally took priority to the protection of commerce. Throughout 1689 no convoy could be obtained by the Company, and the trade was as a result practically at a standstill. Consequently there were double cargoes

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Priest, pp. 304-5; Stowe MSS. 220, f. 54.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 272; *An account of the numbers of woollen cloths, &c.*

<sup>3</sup> Scott, i, p. 309.

waiting to be exported in the following year when a convoying fleet was secured under Admiral Killigrew. In October the ships arrived safely at Smyrna and Constantinople, and at the latter factory their appearance aroused great joy for it was two years since any English goods had been landed there.<sup>1</sup> The total cloth exports for the year numbered 30,769, which, spread over 1689-90, represented a normal average for the past few years, so that the Company had as yet little cause to complain of the depressing effects of the war upon its trade.

The increased danger to merchant shipping was not the only way in which the effects of the war were visible. It had an equally powerful influence upon the situation of affairs in Turkey where the influence of France, now that the two states were linked by a common hostility to the emperor, rapidly became supreme. In July 1690 Sir William Trumbull, who was then ambassador at Constantinople, wrote, 'tis certain this empire at present is more govern'd by the French than the Turkish interest';<sup>2</sup> while in 1693 one of the English factors lamented that 'despised and idle for want of business we saunter about, forced to sneak and give way to every huffing Frenchman we meet, who carry all before them'.<sup>3</sup> This influence was naturally used not only to encourage the Turks against the emperor, but also to embroil them with the English. It was not difficult to stir up ill feeling, for the Porte was aware that England was the ally of its greatest enemy, the emperor, and was contributing—even though indirectly—to the imperial victories in Hungary. Trumbull summed up the position concisely: 'as we are lookt upon allmost as enemies, so all advantages are improved against us by the French ambassador'.<sup>4</sup>

These 'advantages' quickly presented themselves. English ships which tried to prevent the French from entering or leaving Turkish harbours were accused of blocking up the sultan's ports and of violating Turkish neutrality. Complaints were also made that Turkish goods had been captured on French prizes taken at sea and had not been restored to their owners. Many of these accusations doubtless contained some truth, but it was significant that redress was only demanded from the English. Similar violations of international courtesy by the French were allowed to pass without notice, and

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 20. Trumbull to Nottingham, Oct. 31, 1690.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 20. Trumbull to Shrewsbury, July 11, 1690.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 431.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 20. Trumbull to Nottingham, Dec. 22, 1690.

whereas they were sure of receiving a favourable hearing when they complained, the English could never procure any reparation for damage inflicted on their ships or goods in similar circumstances. Every attempt was made by the English government to enforce respect for the neutrality of the Porte upon all English vessels, but its efforts were powerless to shake French influence in Turkey which remained predominant until Louis XIV signed the Peace of Ryswick. French warships and privateers enjoyed the connivance and sometimes the support of the authorities in the Turkish ports, while English ships were obliged to rely entirely upon their own resources for protection or redress.

With the defeat of the Anglo-Dutch fleet by Admiral Tourville off Beachy Head in July 1690 a disastrous period opened for the Levant Company. The victory put the allied fleet out of action for the remainder of the year and gave the command of the channel to the French. In such circumstances it was impossible to dispatch any convoy to Turkey even if the alarm aroused in England by its defenceless position had not also prevented the use of any of the remnants of the fleet for such a purpose, and for the next two years all the efforts of the navy were needed to watch Tourville and protect the supplies crossing to Ireland and the Low countries for the English forces fighting there under General Ginkel and King William. Not until Russell's defeat of the French at La Hogue in April 1692 was the Channel cleared, and the Turkey merchants at once urged that advantages should be taken of such a favourable opportunity to dispatch the long-postponed Levant convoy. But the navy was paralysed by inefficient administration and by a consequent shortage of ships, sailors, and supplies; and in spite of repeated petitions by the Company and promises by the admiralty it was May 1693 before the convoy at last sailed from the Isle of Wight along with the main fleet of the navy under Admirals Shovell, Killigrew, and Delavel who were to escort Sir George Rooke, the commander of the convoying squadron, past Brest where Tourville was sheltering with a powerful force.<sup>1</sup>

But four days before the convoy left England Tourville had stolen out of Brest and joined the Comte D'Estrées, who commanded the Toulon squadron, near the Straits of Gibraltar. No proper intelligence of this reached the English fleet, and on June 6, fifty leagues south of Ushant, the main body left Rooke and returned to the channel. The convoy proceeded on its way, but on June 16

<sup>1</sup> See *H.M.C. House of Lords*, i, pp. 191-2, 193, 195, 197.

it was surprised by the united French fleets in the Bay of Lagos and scattered in all directions. About eighty merchantmen were captured or destroyed by the French, twenty-nine more were burnt or taken in the next few days at Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Malaga, while others were sunk by their crews at Gibraltar to prevent them from falling into French hands.

The merchant fleet which was thus destroyed was 'the richest that ever went for Turkey'.<sup>1</sup> It amounted to over 400 vessels belonging to the English and Dutch merchants, there were about 50,000 pieces of English cloth on board,<sup>2</sup> and the total value of the cargo was estimated to be over four millions sterling.<sup>3</sup> The blow fell heaviest on the Dutch, whose ships had been more exposed to the French assault, but the Levant Company's losses in the disaster amounted 'by a moderate computation' to £600,000.<sup>4</sup> Its trade had already suffered severely. From Aleppo Nathaniel Harley wrote in 1691 that the war had put a stop to all business and that he had had no letters for twelve months, and in the first two years of the struggle even so prudent a merchant as Dudley North lost £10,000 by his ventures.<sup>5</sup> The disaster of 1693 came therefore as a terrible blow to a trade which was already stricken. 'Never within the memory of man', wrote Macaulay, 'had there been in the city a day of more gloom and agitation than that on which the news of the encounter in the Bay of Lagos arrived. Many merchants, an eyewitness said, went away from the royal exchange as pale as if they had received sentence of death'.

In the Levant the catastrophe was felt with even greater force than in London. Harley wrote:

'This last misfortune of our ships is truly a great loss to the nation, but to the traders hither the greatest they or any other society of merchants ever felt at one blow. I cannot compute this factory's (Aleppo) loss to be less than 250 or 300,000 crowns, which is no small matter among five or six and twenty persons. You cannot think me exempt from so general a calamity in which I have but too great a share, but possibly less than others who have lost not only the labour of ten or twelve years but are deprived also of all future hopes.'<sup>6</sup>

At Constantinople no ships had arrived for nearly four years, the warehouses were empty, the treasurer had no money and could get

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 114, p. 564.

<sup>2</sup> Sloane MSS. 2902, f. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Dalrymple, pt. iii, bk. ii, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, p. 243; North, *Lives*, iii, p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, p. 244.

no credit, the factory's debt was larger than it had ever been, and creditors pressed hard for payment when the news of the convoy's destruction arrived.<sup>1</sup>

The Levant Company suffered one more blow before its fortunes changed and its trade revived. The ships which had escaped at Lagos and returned to England set out once more at the beginning of 1694 under the escort of Sir Francis Wheeler, but encountered a tremendous storm off the Spanish coast. Four were sunk by it, one was driven ashore, and the remainder had to put into Cadiz where it was estimated that the expense of their stay would swallow up the value of their contents.<sup>2</sup>

For the next few years the Company enjoyed more prosperous times although its ships continued to be severely handled by French privateers. After La Hogue the French fleet was no longer able to encounter the English on equal terms, and the arrival of Russell in the Mediterranean with the main English fleet in 1694 shut up Tourville's squadron in Toulon. But the decline of French naval power only served to increase the number of French privateers, for Louis XIV transferred his sailors to the transports which had been collected for the invasion of England in 1692 and turned them out as privateers to prey on English shipping. There is ample evidence of the success of this measure. In January 1695 Lord Paget, then ambassador at Constantinople, reported 'Our ships are in the Mediterranean and the French fleet dare not stir out, and yet their privateers have the insolence to threaten our merchantmen, even in the port and in the neighbourhood of our men of war'.<sup>3</sup> It was computed that in the course of the war the French privateers captured or sank 1,400 English ships of a total value of three million pounds.<sup>4</sup> Yet in spite of these corsairs trade was brisk, and while the English fleet remained in the Mediterranean the merchant ships enjoyed a fair degree of safety. Convoys were strongly protected past the French coast as far as Leghorn or Messina and from there were given naval escorts to their various destinations. This arrangement proved successful, and in 1695 the Company was able to send out two fleets with convoys, carrying a total of over 12,000 cloths among their contents, which got back safely to England with return cargoes.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Addit. MSS. 8880, f. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1694-5, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Egerton MSS. 918, f. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Dalrymple, pt. iii, bk. i, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *H.M.C. House of Lords*, ii, pp. 77-8. Only one small vessel was lost in that year to the French.



Three circumstances soon overshadowed this short spell of prosperity. The recall of the fleet from the Mediterranean early in 1696 as a result of the panic aroused in England by the Fenwick-Barclay plot deprived the Company's vessels of the protection they had enjoyed since 1694, and for the remainder of the war the French were again able to inflict great damage on English shipping. The other and more ominous—because more permanent—factors were the renewed competition of the East India Company and the rapid growth of French trade.

## VII

### THE CENTRAL PERIOD OF THE COMPANY'S HISTORY, 1660-1718 (*continued*)

THE Revolution of 1688 brought evil days to the East India Company which under Charles II and James II had been strongly united to the crown by the policy of its governor, Sir Josiah Child. The deposition of the House of Stuart robbed the Company of its most powerful support, and encouraged its numerous opponents to group themselves into an informal society and clamour for the incorporation of a wider Company to control the India trade. In the ranks of this 'new Company' as the association was called—though it had no legal existence—there were many of the Levant merchants who had suffered from the past competition of the East India Company's silk imports and had already petitioned in 1681 to be allowed to trade round Africa into regions which the India Company claimed to be covered by its monopoly. In the autumn of 1693 a similar petition was again put forward. In September Sir John Somers, then lord keeper, wrote to the king concerning the proposed grant of a new charter to the East India Company

'another thing which is stood upon is that, except by act of parliament, the sole trade of the Indies cannot be granted to a few of your subjects exclusive of all the rest; and most of the Turkey merchants as well as other merchants of the great estates being joined in opposing the charter, they press very importunately that in such an unhappy juncture, when they are deprived of the Mediterranean trade and are such losers everywhere, the queen would not exclude them from the trade of so great a part of the world. At the same time they press by petition to be permitted to send out five ships to the Indies undertaking to export in these ships to the value of above £100,000 worth of cloth and other English commodities, and they likewise urge in this petition that by law they cannot be hindered.'<sup>1</sup>

But the request was not granted, and the 'old' Company was strong enough to secure, by means of extensive bribery, the renewal of its charter at the end of 1693.

This new charter contained a clause stipulating that goods of the growth, product, or manufacture of England to the value of £100,000 should be exported annually. In India, however, there

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1693, p. 324.

was little demand for English commodities and the Company had always been obliged to export large quantities of bullion to carry on its trade. To enforce the conveying of such goods to India simply meant that they would be left to rot on the quays at their port of arrival, as Sir Josiah Child had pointed out when the proposal was first made. But the Company was none the less compelled to accept the clause, which had obviously been inspired by the counter offers of the Turkey merchants and others mentioned above; and it must therefore have afforded it a certain sardonic amusement when a way out of the difficulty was found by shipping English cloth of the required value to the Persian Gulf and bartering it in Persia for raw silk.

Tentative efforts had been made to open this market for English goods early in the century, but little progress was made before 1680. About that year a determined effort was begun by the East India Company to increase its trade to Persia, and the Armenian merchants who controlled the wool and silk supplies of the kingdom were encouraged to send their goods to Bombay where they would receive greater profit than if they went through Turkey to Aleppo.<sup>1</sup> In 1691-2 orders were sent out to the Company's agents to push the sale of English cloth in Persia. It was hoped that a profitable trade might be done there as the Company paid no customs and the freight from Bombay was small, so that the cloth could be sold at a much cheaper rate than that which entered Persia from Aleppo.<sup>2</sup> Two years later this determination to enlarge the Persian trade was further strengthened by the clause in the new charter of 1693, and by the destruction of the Turkey convoy which cut off the supplies of English cloth through the Levant. The East India merchants ordered their factors to give every facility for the sale of cloth and expressed the hope that the long-established route of the silk trade between Persia and Aleppo might now be diverted and Ispahan become the centre of it.<sup>3</sup>

All this immediately reacted upon the trade which the Levant Company conducted with the same area through the Turkish ports. In 1696 Nathaniel Harley wrote from Aleppo:

'The East India Company are sending so much cloth to Persia that

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, ii, p. 618.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 160-1. In October 1693 Sir Josiah Child, the governor of the East India Company, wrote out to India that the Turkey merchants 'who had assaulted and battered perpetually at the Company' were to be completely displaced from their privileged position in Turkey in regard to the silk trade, and their place to be taken by the East India Company (Khan, p. 248).

they will quickly ruin the trade of this place and oblige us all to return home'. . . . 'But the Turkey Company may thank themselves, who, not content to enjoy the trade themselves, complained that the East India Company carried out no cloth and thereby gave themselves a mortal blow never to be recovered. For now they do it with that success that they supply Persia, which was wont to be done from Smyrna and this place.'<sup>1</sup>

Two years later he was again complaining that the Turkey trade was 'reduced to a low ebb'. During the three previous years the India Company had sent 6,360 cloths to Persia and over 8,000 to Surat and other places, of which probably half also found their way into the shah's territory. As a result of this the Levant Company which had formerly sent about 12,000 cloths to Aleppo annually to supply the Persian market, was now not able to dispose of more than half that quantity. In Constantinople and Smyrna about 3,000 cloths had been sold every year to be conveyed to Persia by caravan, but few or none of these were now purchased.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Company suffered in two ways at the same time. The supply of Persian silk was diverted into the hands of the East India Company which could convey it to England and undersell the Turkey merchants. This silk was paid for in English cloth, so that the market which the Levant Company had formerly supplied through Aleppo was now stocked from another source. Moreover the amount of raw silk and of calicoes imported from Bengal went up considerably during the last ten years of the century.<sup>3</sup>

The extent of the change produced by the withdrawal of the fleet from the Mediterranean and by this competition of the East India Company is well shown in the figures for the cloth exports of the period. In 1696 they fell to 9,327 pieces, and in 1697 to 6,660 pieces.<sup>4</sup> The average annual export for the nine years from 1688 to 1697 was approximately 12,329 cloths, though many of these were captured or sunk at sea and never reached their destination.<sup>5</sup>

Sometime during the year 1698 the Levant Company presented a petition to the king outlining its grievance against the East India

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, pp. 246-7.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, pp. 251, 257. Between 1697 and 1702 over one million pounds' worth of calicoes were imported into England from the east.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 298.

<sup>5</sup> I base this upon the figures given in S.P. 105. 145, p. 298, and in the pamphlet, *An account of the number of woollen cloths, etc., exported by the Levant Company 1671-1717*.

Company. After stating that the India merchants had carried cloth to Persia and sold it there to conform to the regulations of the charter of 1693 the petitioners went on to say that the districts thus supplied had

'ever since the first formation of the Levant Company by your majesty's most illustrious ancestor (Queen Elizabeth of famous memory) bin supplied from their factories in Turkey from whence it is most commodiously done and at the least charge, and is a principal branch of their trade, which in great measure depends upon the coming down of the Persians with their silk and taking our cloth in exchange thereof in far greater quantity, constantly carrying the same into those parts where the East India Company have now sent theirs, whereby the Persians are discouraged in their trade with Turkey, the manufactories of England rendered contemptible and the number of cloths annually taken off by them in a manner totally obstructed.'<sup>1</sup>

As a result of this petition the question was discussed by the board of trade while the charter for the new East India Company of 1698 was still under consideration. The report made was dated August 1698, and after admitting that the statements of the Turkey merchants were true, it recommended for the new India Corporation that 'the proposal already submitted to the lords of the treasury, viz.—to export a tenth part of the value of their whole exports in woollen goods should be accepted, and an obligation should be added that the draperies should not be vended in Persia'.<sup>2</sup>

This recommendation was adopted, but without the qualifying clause, and in the charter which was given to the new East India Company in September 1698 it was merely required to export English woollen goods amounting in value to one-tenth of its whole export trade without any limitation as to their destination. This reduced the quantity of woollens which the Company was obliged to carry out in England, but it gave no relief to the Turkey merchants for their rivals were left free to capture the Persian cloth and silk trade. In 1700 the commissioners for trade and plantations, in their reply to an inquiry of the house of commons, agreed that it was inconvenient that the East India Company should sell more draperies in Persia than it had done formerly and that it ought to vend them in India, China, Japan, and other places sufficiently removed from the markets of the Levant

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MSS. 2902, f. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1697-1702*, p. 188.

Company to prevent competition;<sup>1</sup> but no steps were taken to secure this. On the other hand the obligation of the East India Company to export English commodities as it had been fixed in 1698 was reaffirmed in the tripartite indenture or letters patent of 1702 which arranged for the ultimate union of the two India Companies. This was to cover a period of seven years, but when that time expired the trade was to be continued under the terms of the charter of 1698, so that the clause concerning exports would still be valid.

This rivalry in the Persian market was not so serious as had been anticipated, for although the East India Company made strenuous and at first apparently successful efforts to push the sale of cloth there it was not able to increase its outlet, and it encountered difficulties over the price of the silk it purchased in return and over the quantity available;<sup>2</sup> but by the opening of the eighteenth century the amount of raw silk which it was bringing to England from India was sufficiently large to alarm the Turkey Company for the future of its trade. In 1702 it told the house of lords '... there never was so small an expense of our commodities at home. That trade is supported by silk. All our other commodities will not supply a third part of our trade. The great importation of silk from India is the greatest enemy our trade has. The India Company has brought in so much silk as is sufficient for the whole kingdom and India will not take off our cloth. They buy for a crown what we pay three for.'<sup>3</sup> In a further statement made to the committee of trade which the lords had set up the Company stated 'That which now seems most to threaten this national and beneficial trade into Turkey is the vast importation of all sorts of raw silk from India in far greater quantities than has ever been heretofore'.<sup>4</sup> The English silk and woollen weavers stood behind the Levant merchants in their opposition to the flooding of the home market with these cheap and attractive Indian goods, and in 1700 their agitation at length succeeded in procuring an act of parliament which levied an extra duty of 15 per cent. upon all wrought silks and painted, dyed, printed, or stained calicoes and muslins imported from Persia, India, or China. But the chief result of this statute was to benefit the Dutch who stepped in and secured the European market for these commodities.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MSS. 2902, f. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Khan, pp. 251, 267-8.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. House of Lords*, v, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> *Statutes at Large*, x, pp. 307-15; Khan, pp. 285-90.

A still more potent danger to the future of the Levant Company's prosperity came from the rapid development of French trade with Turkey after the Peace of Ryswick. When Colbert died trade continued to be fostered by Pontchartrain, the controller-general of finance, and by Seignelay, the minister of marine, and in spite of the wars of Louis's reign it grew steadily in volume as the beneficial results of Colbert's reforms began to make themselves felt. The average annual imports of France from the Levant which had been 5,600,000 livres between 1684 and 1687 rose to 7,700,000 livres for the following seven years.<sup>1</sup> In 1695 while the English fleet was in the Mediterranean they dropped to 2 million livres, but were up again to over 8 million in the following year. As soon as peace was declared a still more rapid rise took place, and for the period 1698-1700 the average imports per annum were nearly 11 million livres in value.<sup>2</sup> In 1702 Sir Robert Sutton, the ambassador to the Porte, sounded the note of alarm. 'It is scarce imaginable how great a trade the French drive all over this empire', he wrote, '... I may assure your lordship that the French make such considerable advances daily in their traffick and incroach so much upon our cloth trade, that unless some effectual means be used to prevent it they will be able to get it out of our hands past all recovery.'<sup>3</sup>

For the moment the Levant Company refused to be alarmed or to take too serious a view of French competition. In 1702 it told the house of lords:

'The French send perpetuanas and cloth to Turkey but we can afford them cheaper and bear them out,' and 'of late years they [the French] have carried down considerable quantities of cloth and perpetuanas made in France of good sorts; and will go on increasing in the woollen manufactures; yet we make no doubt when the trade is free and open but we shall subdue their pretensions to the woollen manufactures in Turkey by underselling them, as we have done heretofore.'<sup>4</sup>

This optimism was probably encouraged by the prosperous wave of trade which the Company had experienced after the peace of Ryswick. In spite of the competition of the French and of the East India Company the exports of the Levant merchants increased considerably in volume when the struggle with France was ended. In 1698 14,485 cloths were sent out. The following year the ship-

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 286. 12 livres = £1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-5.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 21, Sutton to 'My Lord' (prob. Lord Manchester), May 30/June 10, 1702.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. House of Lords*, v, pp. 73-98.

ments reached a total of over 20,000 cloths, and in 1700 the figure had risen to more than 24,000.<sup>1</sup> The annual average export for the ten years from Christmas 1695 to Christmas 1705—which included five years of war—amounted to 14,878 cloths.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the war of the Spanish succession the Company successfully held its ground in the Levant, and thanks to the supremacy of the English fleet in the Mediterranean its trade suffered little serious interruption.<sup>3</sup> Sutton's letters prove that French corsairs were troublesome, but none the less it was French rather than English trade which languished during the struggle.<sup>4</sup> The figures for British trade printed by Sir Charles Whitworth in 1776 show that the approximate average annual values of imports from and exports to Turkey during the period 1697-1702 inclusive were £295,038 and £173,055 respectively, while the same average values for the eleven years of war 1703-13 were £260,315 and £193,369 respectively<sup>5</sup>—a strikingly consistent record in view of the circumstances. It is significant, too, that the letters of Nathaniel Harley who was at Aleppo until 1720 contain no complaints of bad trade after 1700. Competition was already at work undermining the foundations of the Levant trade, but it was not until the third decade of the eighteenth century that signs of a rapid decline became visible. Until then, outwardly, the Company maintained the position which it had established after the Restoration.

A brief survey of the factories in the Levant, during this central period of the Company's existence, will again help to explain the business and policy of the merchants. After the Restoration a

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 145, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *An account of the number of woollen cloths, etc.* The large part which cloth and silk played in the Company's trade at this time is shown by the following figures (taken from Customs 3, Numbers 1 and 4, P.R.O.):

Exports to Turkey 1697-8 = £172,049 odd, of which cloth accounted for £144,000 odd.

Exports to Turkey 1699-1700 = £224,342 odd, of which cloth accounted for £191,000 odd.

Imports from Turkey 1697-8 = £162,018 odd, of which raw silk accounted for £86,000 approx.

Imports from Turkey 1699-1700 = £303,072 odd, of which raw silk accounted for £209,000 approx.

<sup>3</sup> Mention was made in 1705 of the 'great decay' of the trade, but it seems to have been only a passing phase (S.P. 105, 156, Sept. 6, 1705).

<sup>4</sup> The annual trade of the French to the Levant during the years 1703-11 dropped to 5 million livres (Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 344).

<sup>5</sup> In the seven years 1705-12 an average of 17,464 cloths per annum were sent to Turkey (*An account of the number of woollen cloths, etc.*).



change took place in the position of the consul at Zante, who was now appointed, not, as heretofore, by the Company, but by the king on the recommendation of the Company.<sup>1</sup> Henceforward he was spoken of as 'his majesty's consul', and in the early eighteenth century—unlike any of the other consuls in the Levant—he corresponded with the commissioners for trade and plantations. Indeed it seems probable, though for what reason I have been unable to discover, that not only the appointment of the consul, but also the trade to these currant islands slipped entirely out of the hands of the Levant Company. In the Company's imposition book for the years 1669-73 sixty-two ships from Zante are entered,<sup>2</sup> but when the customs returns begin in 1697-8 no imports of currants are recorded under 'Turkey and the Levant'. They appear instead under the entirely separate heading of 'Venice'; and this continued throughout the eighteenth century,<sup>3</sup> during which Zante hardly figures in the Levant Company's papers. In its imposition book on ships inwards which has survived for the years 1731-6<sup>4</sup> not a single vessel is entered as coming from the island. It is also significant that the complaint about quarantine on ships from Zante in 1729 should have been made by the London merchants trading with Venice, and not by the Turkey Company.<sup>5</sup> It would appear that the currant trade at Zante passed from the Levant merchants into the hands of the English who traded with Italy and so fell out of the Company's monopoly, though it must be admitted that its papers afford only negative evidence of such a change. They are entirely silent as to why or when it occurred.

The consulate at Patras continued without interruption, but the practice of running the Morea trade by means of a separate joint stock apparently ceased. The last record of its renewal (for five years) was in 1685. Probably this change was related to the fact that in the eastern war of 1683-99 the Venetians conquered the Morea from the Turks. The war, and the restrictive fiscal policy of the Republic, which had already caused so much bickering in Zante, may well have diminished the trade done in the peninsula

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom*, 1668-9, p. 460; *ibid.*, 1670, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Wheler (i, p. 64) found an English consul and five or six merchants residing on the island in 1675, and stated that they did the principal trade there.

<sup>3</sup> Thus in 1697-8 imports from Venice were £53,601, of which currants accounted for £51,000. In 1730 the corresponding figures were £49,417 and £44,679; and in 1750 they were £31,268 and £27,245. In the first two years (1697-8 and 1730) no currants appear under imports from the Levant and in 1750 only £444 worth were entered.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 169.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. of Treasury Books and Papers*, 1729-30, p. 169.

and made it no longer worth while to form a joint stock to conduct it. The absence of any mention of currants in the customs returns for Turkey and the Levant after 1697-8 certainly proves that little or no business was then being done in the fruit which was one of the chief products in the Morea.

In 1677 it was decided to appoint a consul at Athens, and Lancelot Hobson was given the office in the following year,<sup>1</sup> but the experiment does not seem to have been repeated until 1700 when it was proposed to appoint Benjamin Jones as consul. This time the consulate lasted longer, but like many of the smaller offices of its kind it soon fell into the hands of a Greek. When Pococke visited Athens forty years later the consul was a native and not an Englishman.<sup>2</sup> The goods acquired there were oils, aniseed, honey, wax, leather, pitch, and soap.

The French first established themselves at Salonika in 1685, and the English who went there traded under their protection.<sup>3</sup> Several attempts were made in the next few years to persuade the Levant Company to establish a consul of its own, in particular by Hobson, who had been or still was consul at Athens, and who coveted the appointment; but they were all rejected. Hussey, who was then deputy governor, explained the Company's attitude in a letter to Trumbull in 1690.

'The Company', he wrote, 'have looked upon all new establishments, consuls or factories as suckers that draw sap from their main body, pretending that the trade there would go to the greater scales where they live with more honour, reputation and safety. Mr. Hobson has often wrote to have Salonika, but the gentlemen of Smyrna upon the reason before positively oppose it. The French in many places have such mean persons and trade as rather makes them contemptible, and we have too often found that persons having a public character in those out-places create debts which become charged upon the public, and they are the only caveats I know.'<sup>4</sup>

This restrictive policy was not abandoned, so far as Salonika was concerned, until 1715, when Richard Kemble was appointed consul there.<sup>5</sup>

A few factors still dwelt at Adrianople which became a market

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 154, Mar. 22, 1676/7; S.P. 105. 114. Company to Finch, May 30, 1677.

<sup>2</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 435.

<sup>4</sup> H.M.C. Downshire, i, p. 335.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 116. Company to Sutton, Oct. 27, 1715.

for cloth, tin, and lead whenever there was war between the sultan and the emperor; but in Pococke's time little business was being done.<sup>1</sup> In the archipelago Greeks acted as agents for the Company on the islands of Paros and Mykonos,<sup>2</sup> and on Chios a native of Italian extraction was recognized as vice-consul in 1687 and throughout the eighteenth century the appointment continued to be held by Greeks or Levantine Italians.<sup>3</sup> At the Dardanelles one consul served for the English, French, and Dutch.<sup>4</sup> In 1709 the trade of the Company was found to require an agent on the island of Crete, and a vice-consul, who resided at Canea, was then appointed.<sup>5</sup> In Cyprus the vice-consul was located at Larnaka, and he was made independent of Aleppo in 1722.<sup>6</sup>

On the Syrian coast the French preserved their predominant position. While they had establishments at Aleppo, Tripoli, Sidon, Acre, Beirut, and Damascus, the English Levant Company deliberately discouraged trade except through Scanderoon to Aleppo. In 1674 Nointel found one man acting as joint consul for the English, French, and Dutch at Tripoli and reported that the English no longer visited Acre;<sup>7</sup> but it is clear that some trade was being done through these ports, for in 1683 the Company wrote out to the consul at Aleppo 'and in regard wee finde it inconvenient for our trade that any of the nation should reside as factors at Aczia, Tripoly or any other place upon that coast wee have prohibited the same and pray you to discourage it all you can'. Two years later, when the trade on the coast had increased to the detriment of that of Aleppo, it ordered all who traded there to pay double consulage in the hope of suppressing it.<sup>8</sup> Probably these repressive measures were unsuccessful, for at the close of

<sup>1</sup> Motraye, i, p. 279; Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Tournefort, i, pp. 204, 283.

<sup>3</sup> Stowe MSS. 220, f. 89. He was under the authority of the consul at Smyrna. There had been a vice-consul on the island ever since the original consulate had been moved to Smyrna, but he had had no official recognition by the Company before 1687 (Stowe MSS. 219, f. 194).

<sup>4</sup> Wheler, ii, p. 326; Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 434.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 115. Company to Sutton, Dec. 1, 1709.

<sup>6</sup> Teonge, p. 148; S.P. 105. 116. Company to the treasurer at Constantinople, Dec. 13, 1722. For a period during the 1680's no English agent existed in Cyprus and the French consul looked after the affairs of the English merchants, but on the outbreak of war with France in 1689 Richard Westbrook was appointed consul (S.P. 105. 114. Company to Westbrook, Sept. 11, 1689).

<sup>7</sup> Vandal, *Nointel*, pp. 311, 314. The joint consulate at Tripoli was in existence in 1663 (*H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 271).

<sup>8</sup> S.P. 105. 114, pp. 254, 339.

the century Maundrell found a consul at Tripoli,<sup>1</sup> and in 1700 the English and Dutch established a joint vice-consul at Acre.<sup>2</sup>

The treatment of the younger Bendysh was a good illustration of the main reason why the Company so consistently discouraged the trade to Egypt. It was the classic land of *avánias*. In no province did Moslem fervour burn so brightly against the infidel, nowhere was the power of the sultan more relaxed; and the Franks who dwelt there were subjected to a régime of extortion which in its insolence and regularity far exceeded that experienced elsewhere in the Levant. In 1622 the ambassadors at Constantinople combined to petition the grand signior against the 'intolerable burdens' placed upon their nationals in Cairo, and threatened to abandon the trade there.<sup>3</sup> In 1661 Winchilsea wrote to the pasha of Cairo recommending to his protection the 'ruined estate' of the English consul and merchants who had been violently oppressed by his predecessors,<sup>4</sup> and Sir Thomas Bendysh's request to be made consul after the Restoration was refused because the trade to Egypt was too hazardous owing to the repeated *avánias* imposed upon European merchants in the past. In one year Thevenot saw the French consul mulcted of 80,000-100,000 piastres, and he and the English consul several times unjustly imprisoned.<sup>5</sup>

Profitable trade was difficult in such conditions, but individual merchants, who risked only their own capital and had not to shoulder the responsibility for all English subjects in Egypt as the Company had, continued to trade. From 1669 to 1684 a certain Don Gasparo di Rizzi was acting as unofficial consul for the English and Dutch at Cairo,<sup>6</sup> and when he left English affairs passed into the hands of the Venetian consul, until he also disappeared as a result of the war between Venice and Turkey which began in 1684. Then they were transferred to the protection of the French consul. But the Company continued to frown upon the trade. Sir Daniel Harvey was forbidden to try to develop it on the ground that it was 'of small consequence to the English and the scale not proper for their ships or for the vent of our native commodities, but (on the contrary) liable to *avánias* and other mischief, which, whatever

<sup>1</sup> Maundrell, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 390. They had formerly traded there under the protection of the French consul.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, 1621-3, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, pp. 161-2.

<sup>5</sup> Thevenot, ii, pp. 808-11. D'Arvieux (i, p. 155) also speaks of the repeated *avánias* imposed on the Franks at this time.

<sup>6</sup> Stowe MSS. 219, ff. 98-9.

the occasion, are likely to fall at last upon the Company'.<sup>1</sup> To Lord Chandos it wrote: 'We desire your Lordship to discourage and discountenance the trade to Alexandria all you can, and we think those that are concerned in it do the least deserve any of your care.'<sup>2</sup> On another occasion it added: 'If it rayned gold wee should not think it worth the while to goe and fetch it' (at Alexandria).<sup>3</sup> Sir William Trumbull was also told in 1688: 'It is no little trouble unto us that so many ships are concerned in the hazardous trade of Alexandria.'<sup>4</sup>

Clearly traffic with Egypt must have been growing in spite of official opposition. That it was of some consequence seems proved by the decision of the Company in 1689, either under pressure from members engaged in the Egyptian trade or else inspired by the obvious inconvenience of leaving English affairs in the hands of the French consul at a time when the two countries were at war, 'to settle a trade at Cairo.'<sup>5</sup> But no further steps were taken, perhaps because of the dislocation of trade in the Mediterranean caused by the war with France, until 1697 when it was decided to appoint as consul Miles Fleetwood—a merchant who had gone out to Egypt two years before.<sup>6</sup> Lord Paget secured the sultan's *barat* in the same year and the new consul was formerly recognized by the pasha of Egypt in July 1698.<sup>7</sup> Within two years a vice-consulate had been created under him at Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> Aaron Hill who was in Egypt about this time says that the English did a considerable trade through Alexandria in drugs, perfumes, skins, dates, sugar, carpets, and eastern goods,<sup>9</sup> but little was done to break the strong position—amounting almost to a monopoly—which the French had possessed in Egypt since the decline of Venice. In Cairo alone there were fifty French merchants in 1702,<sup>10</sup> and there were also French settlements in Alexandria and Rosetta. At the same time there were only two Englishmen living in Cairo and one at Alexandria.<sup>11</sup>

The three factories at Constantinople, Smyrna, and Aleppo reached their greatest prosperity and size in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The trade done at the last two seems to have

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 152, Dec. 4, 1668.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 114, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Company to Chandos, Aug. 14, 1686.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 295.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 155, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 331, 406-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 8, p. 454.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 115. Company to Paget, May 29, 1700.

<sup>9</sup> Hill, p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 402.

<sup>11</sup> Charles-Roux, *Autour d'une route*, p. 17.

been about equal and to have exceeded the volume which passed through Constantinople. In the four years between 1669 and 1673 sixteen vessels were entered inwards from Smyrna and eighteen from Scanderoon, while of twenty-two general ships appointed in the three years 1672, 1675, and 1678 eight went to Scanderoon, six to Smyrna, seven to Smyrna and Constantinople, and one to Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> At Constantinople the number of factors remained fairly consistently about twenty-five;<sup>2</sup> but there were in addition numerous servants and dependents who were not members of the Company. Rycaut says that Sir William Hussey on his entrance in 1691 was met by at least fifty of the English nation on horseback,<sup>3</sup> but these would include the captains of ships lying in the port as well as merchants from other places of whom there were always some in the capital on business. The French were not nearly so numerous and the volume of their trade—as has been noticed—was comparatively insignificant.

The figures for Smyrna are not quite so clear. In 1661 forty-nine merchants had the oath to deliver true entries of all cargoes tendered to them,<sup>4</sup> but a list of January 1704 contains only thirty-six names.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand Teonge (writing in 1675) said that there was then a factory of a hundred men in the port, and Wheler confirms the figure. It is not possible to believe that its numbers rose as rapidly as this from 1661 or that they fell even more rapidly to 1704. In the great earthquake of 1688 only two of the English merchants perished, and while the disorganized condition of trade which it produced, together with the war of 1689-97, will explain the drop from forty-nine to thirty-six they cannot account for the reduction of the factory to one-third, which the accounts of Teonge and Wheler imply. Probably the larger figure includes all the resident English, and the smaller numbers represent only the authorized factors and apprentices. The French at this period numbered thirty 'without counting others who did a less considerable trade' and there were eighteen or twenty Dutch merchants settled in the port.<sup>6</sup>

In 1662 there were about fifty factors at Aleppo.<sup>7</sup> In 1676

<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from S.P. 105. 166, 167.

<sup>2</sup> A list of 1704 gives twenty-six names in all, including the ambassador. Bodleian Pamphlets Folio 665, f. 194. Aaron Hill (1709) said there were 25-6 merchants there (p. 86).

<sup>3</sup> Rycaut, p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 491.

<sup>5</sup> Bodleian Pamphlets Folio 665, f. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Tournefort, ii, pp. 496-7.

<sup>7</sup> Verney, iv, p. 146.

Teonge preached to 'over fifty' Englishmen, and in 1699 Maundrell reported that there were more than forty of his countrymen residing there.<sup>1</sup> The French had sixteen merchants in their factory, and Holland was represented by only two Dutchmen.<sup>2</sup>

There appears to have been a definite tendency on the part of the Company to develop these three factories at the expense of the smaller ones. The collection of trade into a few large centres simplified the whole machinery in regard to the provision of shipping, the compilation of accounts, the stability and uniformity of the market; and it rendered more easy the difficult task of organizing and controlling the factors in the Levant. Moreover, since their monopoly embraced all Turkish goods sold in the English market the Levant merchants were probably prompted to play for safety and large profits on limited supplies rather than for an extension of their business, with the possibility of overcrowding the home market and losing on excessive stocks; and this policy was helped by concentration. By limiting its sellings and buyings in Turkey the Company was able to starve the English demand for its commodities sufficiently to realize a more certain if not a larger total profit than it would have gained by allowing a greater liberty to its members.<sup>3</sup> The East India Company had a case to make out against its rivals, but there was a foundation of truth in its petition against the proposed formation of a regulated company for the India trade in 1696.

'If', it was stated, 'they mean that a regulated company will open and enlarge the trade in India to such places as have not been attempted by a joint stock, they conceive the contrary is evident by the Turkey Company, who, though established over 100 years, have not been known to have settled any trade but in three places, viz. Smyrna, Aleppo, and Constantinople; nor doth it seem reasonable to believe that any private person should fit out or send a cargo to places unknown, when he neither knows whether the goods he sent out are vendable there or whether he can meet with proper goods for his market at home. But it has always been observed that the particular traders in a regulated company content themselves to go to a certain known place of trade, ever taking a measure of their profit and loss before they go out, and ever pursuing their private certain interest, without regard to the advantage of the nation.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maundrell, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 379 and note.

<sup>3</sup> The Company was accused of somewhat similar practices in England. The clothiers asserted that by postponing its shipping, sometimes for as long as two years, it procured the cloth on its own terms through this 'politick timing' (*Reasons for preserving the Publick Market of Blackwell Hall, &c.*).

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. House of Lords*, ii, p. 42.

The facts mentioned above with regard to the Levant Company's attitude towards the development of trade at Salonika, on the Syrian coast and in Egypt prove that while there was no lack of enterprise on the part of individual members, the general court of the Company in England did try to curb attempts at expansion and to discourage the opening of new markets.<sup>1</sup> A resolution in November 1683 shows that in theory at least the Company disclaimed responsibility for all trade outside of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Aleppo, and that such factors as engaged in it lived at their own hazard and expense, the consuls and vice-consuls being bidden to give them the utmost protection 'at their own charge only'.<sup>2</sup>

The occupants of the embassy during this period deserve a brief notice. The Earl of Winchilsea has already been mentioned. His successor Sir Daniel Harvey<sup>3</sup> died in Turkey in 1672. Sir John Finch,<sup>4</sup> who replaced him, was a cousin of Winchilsea, and had formerly been English minister at Florence. It was not a very happy choice, for Finch lacked the mental stamina and aggressiveness needed to deal with the atmosphere of Stamboul and he was doubly unfortunate in passing from the polished placid life of Italy to encounter the insolent truculence of Kara Mustafa. He struggled to the best of his ability, but his timid fussy soul made him an easy prey for the vizier, and it was with a genuine sigh of relief that he greeted the arrival of his successor, Lord Chandos, sent out in 1681 with stern letters from the king to the sultan and

<sup>1</sup> When the factors at Smyrna talked of moving to Chios after the great earthquake of 1688 the Company wrote 'and as we are very loath to relinquish any of our ancient settled factories so we are absolutely against erecting any new ones' (*H.M.C. Downshire*, i, pp. 302-3).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 154, p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> Of Combe Park, Surrey. He was the son of Daniel Harvey 'a merchant of the greatest reputation' (as Clarendon describes him) in Charles I's reign who was the confidant of Archbishop Laud (it was he who brought the young Edward Hyde before Laud's notice in 1635) and a prominent member both of the East India and of the Levant Company. (He was elected a committee man of the former 1636, and an assistant of the latter 1637.) He died before 1650 when his son Daniel was under the guardianship of Eliab Harvey (*Calendar of the Committee of Compounding*, iii, pp. 2173-4). The young Daniel married Elizabeth, the sister of Ralph Montague—'a good woman' according to Pepys, and he was knighted by Charles II, May 27, 1660 (Shaw, ii, p. 226). During the next seven years he and his wife appear in Pepys as the close friends of the reigning favourite Lady Castlemaine. In the four days' battle with the Dutch in June 1666 Harvey fought under Albemarle and Rupert. He sailed for Turkey in August 1668 and the Earl of Castlemaine accompanied him (*Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1667-8, p. 535; 1668-9, p. 455).

<sup>4</sup> Finch's life is in the *D.N.B.* See also Abbott, *Under the Turk*.



the grand vizier protesting against the ill-treatment of the English in the past.

Chandos<sup>1</sup> probably owed his election to the fact that he was a connexion of the Earl of Berkeley, then governor of the Levant Company, and had married the daughter of Sir Henry Barnard, one of the leading Turkey merchants in London. Most of the chief members of the Company were whig in their politics and Chandos, to ingratiate himself with them, had associated prominently with the 'petitioners' in the struggle then raging over the exclusion bill. He thus incurred the displeasure of the king, and only after he had made a private submission to Charles at Windsor, and a more public apology before the council would the king approve of his election.<sup>2</sup> His arrival and the letters he bore forced Kara Mustafa to drop his outstanding claims on Finch and to disgorge most of the money he had wrung from him; but the wily Turk promptly established a more defensible claim against the merchants in order to compensate himself for these surrenders.

By the capitulations the English were obliged to pay 3 per cent. customs duties in Turkey, but at Smyrna it had become the practice to collect the duty on exported silk—one of the chief items of English trade there—from the native dealers who sold to the merchants, and not directly from the English who were too expert at running goods on board ship without paying the customs. The vizier now put forward a demand for the payment by the English merchants themselves of the 3 per cent. upon all silk shipped for the last five years under pretence of enforcing the capitulations—a claim which involved a sum of about a hundred thousand dollars.<sup>3</sup> It may have been that frauds at Smyrna gave some legitimate excuse for the demand, but the claim was frankly used by the vizier and his creatures as a lever to secure money, and when two of the chief factors in Constantinople were imprisoned by Kara Mustafa, Chandos was obliged to give in and buy off his pretensions by agreeing to pay 110 purses (55,000 dollars).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Brydges son of Sir John Brydges, Bart., of Wilton Castle, Hereford, and cousin and heir of the 7th Lord Chandos. He was born 1642 and died 1714. By his wife he had twenty-two children (Ellis, *Correspondence*, ii, p. 15). In 1690, when his successor Sir William Trumbull was recalled, he offered to go out again as ambassador (S.P. 105. 155, p. 138). His son, James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, was governor of the Levant Company 1718-36.

<sup>2</sup> North, *Examen*, p. 463; Stowe MSS. 219, f. 142; Christie, *Shaftesbury*, ii, p. 554, note.

<sup>3</sup> North, *Lives*, iii, pp. 5-6; Stowe MSS. 219, f. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Stowe MSS., 219, ff. 26-7.

With the removal of this nightmare vizier in 1683 peace settled on Constantinople once more, and Chandos, whose rather pompous dignity concealed a jovial nature, spent the remainder of his time in Turkey uneventfully, squabbling about punctilios with his French colleague and enjoying the convivialities of the factory where the pipe and bottle ruled supreme. He appears to have handled the affairs of the Company to its satisfaction; but neither King Charles, nor his brother and successor James, had forgotten his conduct in 1680, and when the crisis of the popish plot was over the king resolved to recall him because, according to Chandos's own account, he judged it 'a fitt conjuncture now to put some discountenance on such as have formerly shew'd themselves seditiously disposed—among which gang' he (Chandos) 'was lookt upon to have hearded'.<sup>1</sup> Charles's order for his revocation in November 1684 was at once confirmed by James when he became king.<sup>2</sup> The successor appointed, Sir William Soames, died at Malta in 1686 on his way out;<sup>3</sup> but Sir William Trumbull at length took Chandos's place in July 1687.

Trumbull<sup>4</sup> was probably the ablest man who had held the embassy since Roe's time. At Oxford he had been a fellow of All Souls, and he had practised as a civilian and held various official appointments, including a mission to Paris, before he was sent to the Porte; while in later life he was secretary of state for a time during the reign of William the Third. Cool, self-contained, prone to melancholy, and with a touch of the puritan in his make-up he was the very negation of Chandos, and before the latter left Constantinople the two men had quarrelled violently.<sup>5</sup>

His embassy, coinciding as it did with the Revolution at home, marked an important development in the position of the office, for the war with France and the anxiety of the new English government to put a stop to hostilities between the Turks and Austria so that the emperor should be free to throw all his forces against Louis XIV produced increasing emphasis upon the diplomatic aspect of the embassy, and transformed its holder from a commercial agent masquerading as an ambassador into a servant of the crown sent primarily for political and diplomatic business.

<sup>1</sup> Stowe MSS. 219, f. 142.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 154, pp. 408, 428.

<sup>3</sup> Stowe MSS. 220, ff. 6, 10. Soames came from Harley in Suffolk and was sheriff of the county in 1678. North (*Examen*, p. 516) gives some details about him.

<sup>4</sup> Trumbull's life is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>5</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 23; Stowe MSS. 220, f. 96; Addit. MSS. 34799, pp. 2-4.

The wars of the eighteenth century perpetuated this change and although the ambassador continued to occupy his dual position for over another century the crown henceforth dislodged the Levant Company from the predominant place which it had hitherto held in the partnership. The days had gone when a secretary of state could write of Constantinople 'that place is soe remote as any intelligence from hence hither (it's conceived) can be of little use here'.<sup>1</sup> As Great Britain assumed a leading place in the European states system and began to dominate the balance of power, Constantinople became a nodal point in her diplomacy and the position of the ambassador changed accordingly.

In 1689 Trumbull was ordered to endeavour to mediate peace between the Porte and the emperor, but he had been unable to accomplish anything when he was recalled, at his own request, in 1691.<sup>2</sup> The next two holders of the office, Sir William Hussey,<sup>3</sup> deputy-governor of the Company, and William Harbord,<sup>4</sup> who were sent out from England with instructions to promote a pacification, both died in quick succession at Belgrade, Hussey in September 1691 and Harbord in July 1692. The changing character of the embassy was shown by the next appointment. Lord Paget,<sup>5</sup> then English ambassador at Vienna, was ordered to leave for Turkey with all speed and it was he, in conjunction with the Dutch ambassador Colyer, who eventually mediated peace between Austria, Venice, Poland, and the Porte at Carlowitz in 1699. Paget

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 119. Sir Edward Nicholas to Winchelsea in 1661.

<sup>2</sup> The Company thanked him warmly for his 'many good offices' and 'faithful and successful administration of our affairs' (*H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 358).

<sup>3</sup> Knighted on his appointment to the office Apr. 17, 1690 (*Shaw*, ii, p. 265). He had been a factor at Aleppo and was admitted to the freedom of the Company Mar. 22, 1676/7. He was the most favoured candidate for the embassy in 1680, but Charles II refused to sanction the appointment of any one who had formerly been in Turkey in a lesser rank than that of ambassador (*H.M.C. Finch*, ii, p. 76). He was elected deputy-governor of the Company, Jan. 18, 1687/8.

<sup>4</sup> Curiously omitted from the *D.N.B.* The second son of Sir Chas. Harbord; born about 1635; began his political career in 1672 as secretary to the Earl of Essex, the lord lieutenant of Ireland; took part in the attack on Danby in parliament, believed in the popish plot, and supported the exclusion bill; absent from England during the reign of James II, probably in Holland except in 1686 when he served as a volunteer in the Imperial army at the siege of Buda; sailed with William III on his expedition to England 1688; and was made paymaster-general and a privy councillor; lost this employment Mar. 1690 largely owing to the complaints of Schomberg who commanded the English army in Ireland in 1689; sent to Holland in July 1690 to promise an inquiry into the disastrous naval battle of Beachy Head; appointed vice-treasurer of Ireland in Nov. 1690—an office which he held until he went to Turkey.

<sup>5</sup> Paget is in the *D.N.B.*

was an able man, normally reserved and quiet, but with an irascible temper which broke out violently when he was provoked too far; and his decisions, once made, were unshakeable. The strength and sincerity of his character won for him—and for his country—the goodwill of the Porte, and when he at length asked to be recalled the Turks sent him away in 1702 loaded with gifts and favours.

His successor Sir Robert Sutton<sup>1</sup> had also had a diplomatic training at Vienna where he had acted as secretary to his cousin, Lord Lexington, English Ambassador 1695-7, and was subsequently resident at the imperial court before being sent to Constantinople. He was a competent diplomatist, and his equable disposition not only served him in good stead in his relations with the Turks, but also enabled him to secure the esteem of the Levant merchants who had quarrelled violently with the more assertive Paget over his handling of their finances,<sup>2</sup> but never tired of thanking Sutton for his 'integrity and candour' in their affairs. He was given leave to return to England on his own request in 1716, but on the proposal of the Emperor Charles VI he was appointed in the following year to mediate between Austria and Turkey at the Congress of Passarowitz. The treaty which was signed there in 1718 was a personal triumph for him, and a valuable contribution to the peace of Europe.

The manner of appointing to the embassy became fixed during this period. Winchilsea and Harvey were nominated by King Charles who merely informed the Company of his decision;<sup>3</sup> but as time went on and the King's popularity waned he adopted a more

<sup>1</sup> Another strange omission from the *D.N.B.* He was 'bred a churchman' and went to Vienna with Lord Lexington in the capacity both of chaplain and secretary (Macky, *Memoirs of Secret Service*, p. 99). He was knighted at Kensington June or July 18, 1701 (Shaw, ii, p. 272). On his return to England from the Congress of Passarowitz he was sent as ambassador to Paris 1720-1. He sat in parliament for Nottinghamshire and was made a P.C. in 1722, and was given a K.B. in 1725. In 1732-3 he was censured by the house of commons for neglect of duty as one of the directors of the charitable corporation whose finances were in disorder owing to maladministration (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1732, ii, pp. 578-9, 767, 978, 990). He was one of the assistants of the Royal African Company (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1732, ii, p. 584) and sat in parliament for Nottinghamshire a second time in 1727 and for Great Grimsby in 1734. He died Aug. 13, 1746, aged 75. He had married Judith Dowager Countess of Sunderland, by whom he had children (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1746, p. 441; *E.C. Complete Baronetage*, v, p. 162).

<sup>2</sup> Paget wrote of the Company on one occasion: 'I have received worse usage from them than I thought could have been given me from gentlemen. I am in some of their letters treated more like a footman than an ambassador' (Addit. MSS. 8880, f. 94).

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1660-1, p. 65; 1667-8, p. 103.

gracious attitude, and a compromise was tacitly accepted by which the Company suggested a candidate for the sovereign's approval, thereby recognizing his right, and he accepted the nominee, thus waiving the exercise of it. In 1672 Finch was appointed in this way, the merchants proposing him to the king, and formally electing him when Charles's recommendation was received.<sup>1</sup> The same procedure was adopted over Chandos in 1680. The Company thanked the king for allowing them to propose a successor to Finch, and Charles, in turn, approved of their selection after Chandos had made his submission for supporting the whigs. But four years later, when the crisis of the exclusion bill conflict was over, and the authority of the crown had been firmly re-established, the king reverted to the earlier Restoration precedent by nominating Sir William Soames to succeed Chandos.<sup>2</sup> When Soames died James II similarly appointed Trumbull to the office.<sup>3</sup> In both cases the Company acquiesced without complaint, and chose committees to thank the king for his kindness and consideration in its affairs. The Revolution of 1688 once more reversed matters, and the merchants regained for a brief period the privilege of choosing the ambassador. The election of Trumbull's successor was left in their hands, and it was they who presented their deputy-governor, William Hussey, to the new king as a suitable candidate for the embassy.<sup>4</sup> But the growing diplomatic importance of the position soon robbed them of this concession, and when Hussey died in 1691 William III ordered Harbord to succeed him without first consulting the Company.<sup>5</sup> Paget and Sutton were appointed in the same way,<sup>6</sup> the king's decision being merely notified to the merchants for their formal ratification; and this remained the procedure as long as dual control existed. From 1691 onwards, in spite of several protests and petitions,<sup>7</sup> the Levant Company was deprived of any real share in the choice of the ambassador, although the nominees of the crown were still submitted to it and a *pro forma* election continued to be held. The merchants were notified of the royal will and responded by unanimously electing

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 153, p. 200; Abbott, *Under the Turk*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 154, p. 408.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 155, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1689-90, p. 469; Luttrell, ii, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 155, p. 187. The appointment was said to be against the Company's wishes (*H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 387).

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 155, p. 215; Luttrell, iv, p. 718; S.P. 105. 115. Company to Paget, Jan. 9, 1701.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. in 1699 the Company petitioned to be allowed to select Paget's successor (S.P. 105. 155, p. 468).

as ambassador the individual named in the sovereign's message and by making him free of the Company.

The emoluments of the office had declined considerably by Sutton's time. Winchilsea, Harvey, and Finch were paid 10,000 Spanish dollars or pieces of eight per annum and in addition received a yearly gratuity of 2,000 dollars; but when Lord Chandos was appointed the salary was reduced to 8,000 dollars per annum, the gratuity remaining unaltered. At the close of the century the Company ordered all payments in future to be made in Dutch lion dollars which were of considerably less value than the Spanish coins, and Sutton complained that this had reduced his pay by one-third. Moreover, it was decided in 1698 to withdraw the generous equipage allowance, usually about £600, which had hitherto been given to each ambassador on appointment. The daily allowance in money from the sultan still continued, but it was generally difficult to obtain on account of the corruption of the Turkish officials. Winchilsea asserted that it had been cut down through the extravagance of the sultan and the peculations of his ministers,<sup>1</sup> and Paget found it 'more beneficial to the distributors than to the receivers'.<sup>2</sup>

But these official sources of remuneration did not exhaust the possibilities of the post, and men of rank competed for it because of the opportunity which it offered of recuperating diminished fortunes. Winchilsea confessed that he had accepted the embassy 'to no other end than to cleare my debts and advance the revenue of my estate',<sup>3</sup> and Lord Chandos 'raised his estate considerably by it'.<sup>4</sup> The money for this came from private transactions of various kinds. The ambassador, by his articles with the Company, was prohibited from trading, but this did not cover the traffic in jewels and money, and profit could usually be made by buying the former for sale in England, and by speculations in the rates of exchange between the various currencies used in the Levant. A part of the large measure of wine which the ambassador was allowed to import annually free of duty could always be sold advantageously to other Franks, or to Turks who did not take the

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 21. Paget to Blathwayte, July 20, 1699.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, p. 242. Chandos admitted that he had saved between 15,000 and 20,000 dollars out of his allowance (Stowe MSS. 219, f. 199), but in addition to this he remitted money home through English agents at Leghorn and Marseilles.

prohibitions of their creed too seriously; and a constant revenue was obtained from the sale of barats or patents of protection which entitled the possessor to all the benefits of the English capitulations, including exemption from the poll tax. Nominally these barats were supposed to be for the personal retinue of the ambassador, but their scope was, in practice, much wider, and wealthy Armenians, Greeks, and Jews were only too ready to pay handsomely for them to escape from Turkish justice and taxation.<sup>1</sup> For the unscrupulous there appear to have been other equally certain methods of gain, for Winchilsea wrote that 'any ambassador that is not an honest man (if that he be not a foole) may deceive the Company in great matters, and all the witt they have and their factours will never be able either to find it out or to prevent it'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> £2,000 was sometimes paid for a barat (Beaujour, p. 430). The abuse was stopped by a clause in the Treaty of the Dardanelles 1809. Liston stated that the sale of these protections had been worth £2,000-3,000 per annum to his predecessors (*Account of the Levant Company*, p. 54; F.O. 78. 16. Liston to Grenville, April 25, 1795). In 1788 there were said to be 42 holders of barats under the British ambassador (Addit. MSS. 38229, f. 159).

<sup>2</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 418.

## VIII

### DECLINE

THE next period of the Company's history was one of adversity and decline. It opened with a sharp pamphlet warfare—arising out of a by-law or regulation passed in 1718—in which the Company's conduct was subjected to some hostile criticism. In the past the merchants had employed two methods of shipping their goods to Turkey. Sometimes members of the Company had been left free to trade by 'private' ships: that is to say they could individually dispatch their ventures at any time and on any ship according to inclination so long as they had made proper entries of all their cargoes to the Company's officials and paid the appropriate dues. At other times a system of 'joint' or 'general' ships had been adopted. These ships were chosen by the general court of the Company, their time of sailing was fixed by it, cargo space on them was apportioned to those who wished to trade, and members were prohibited from forwarding their wares to the Levant by any other vessels under penalty of having to pay an extra 20 per cent. duty on them. Normally such general ships were appointed and dispatched once during the year.<sup>1</sup> This system had first begun in 1625<sup>2</sup> and throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century the Company had alternated periodically between private and general shipping.<sup>3</sup>

The decision to elect general ships rested upon various factors. It simplified the whole process of collecting the Company's impositions and fees from members; it enabled the export and import of goods to be regulated so that there should not be a glut either in the English or in the Levant markets, it permitted the movement of cargoes to be better controlled, it gave greater security against confiscation by an irate pasha or an avaricious qadi, and

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars about the general ships see below, Chap. XI. The Merchant Adventurers had practised a similar system in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lipson, II, pp. 222-3).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 148, Apr. 6, 1625.

<sup>3</sup> General ships were employed, with some possible gaps, from 1625 to 1649, again in 1654-5 and between 1660 and 1683. From 1687 to 1713 the trade was carried on sometimes by private and sometimes by general ships. From 1713 to 1718 the trade was again left open (*An historical view of the conduct and proceedings of the Turkey Company*).



it made it possible to send the ships in convoy and so provided a larger measure of protection.<sup>1</sup> Strained relations with Algiers or war with Holland or France naturally encouraged the adoption of general shipping. But the system appears to have opened the door to various abuses, and when the Company passed a by-law in 1718 ordering that all trade should henceforth be conducted by annual general ships protests were raised, and seven prominent members of the Company itself, headed by Sir John Eyles, petitioned parliament against the new regulation. They complained that they had purchased cloth before the by-law was passed and now—owing to the delay in appointing the general ships—were prevented from exporting it; and in justification of their anxiety to trade they claimed that the interest of the nation lay in a large consumption of goods rather than in a high price for a limited turnover.<sup>2</sup> The Company defended its action on the ground that so much cloth had been sent out to Turkey in the two previous years that it was necessary to put a curb upon its exports to prevent a glut. Forty-three thousand cloths had been dispatched to the Levant during 1716–17 and the factors had complained of the danger of swamping the market. The delay in the sailing of the general ships, it was further explained, had arisen from the outbreak of war with Spain in 1718, and the consequent need for a convoy for the merchant fleet. Regulation of the kind proposed would, so the Company contended, raise the value of English goods in the Levant and of the return cargoes of silk in the home market.<sup>3</sup>

Heavy exports in the past and the increasing competition of French cloth no doubt afforded a perfectly sound reason for the full warehouses in the Levant, and may have justified the limitation of further shipments in 1718, but none the less the continued outcry against the system of general shipping, which remained in force for the next twenty-six years, seems to prove that it sometimes concealed motives of a less defensible nature than the mere regulation of the flow of trade. Its opponents not only argued that to curb British trade in this way was deliberately to encourage the extension of French and Dutch enterprise in the Levant, but they

<sup>1</sup> Thus it was stated in 1631 that joint shipping was decreed 'both for the keeping up the price and maintaining the cloth and other English commodities in good esteem in Turkey and for advancing the sales thereof and the returns at home as also the better to ensure the duties of consular and impositions both there and here' (S.P. 105. 148, Mar. 2, 1630/1).

<sup>2</sup> *The case of several members of the Levant Company complaining of the restraint of their trade.*

<sup>3</sup> *The case of the Levant Company.*

also accused a handful of the most influential members of the Company of working the system of general shipping for their own selfish profit. It was stated that these great merchants favoured the use of general ships because it enabled them to control the allotment of space on the vessels, to secure adequate accommodation for their own goods and at the same time to crowd out their competitors. By regulating the sailing of the ships they could not only raise the value of their cargoes in Turkey through the well-timed creation of a temporary shortage of English goods, but could also buy cloth in England almost at their own price. For as the ships sailed only from London the manufacturers were obliged to send their cloth there, and they were often kept waiting for months before the exporters would purchase it because the dispatch of the Company's vessels was liable to repeated alterations or prolonged delays. This uncertainty of shipment was used, so it was said, to force down the price of cloth, and even those members of the Company who did not belong to the controlling clique dared not buy, not knowing when the ships would be appointed and they could export it.<sup>1</sup> Adam Smith confirmed these criticisms of the system of general shipping, including the practice among those factors which in his eyes made the Company 'a strict and oppressive monopoly', but it was not until 1744, when the Company's regulations were all reviewed, and in some cases revised, under the influence of a new wave of criticism,<sup>2</sup> that general shipping was abandoned. It was then resolved by the general court 'as a fixed rule of their conduct' never henceforth to restrain or impede members in any manner from importing or exporting at such times and places as they desired within the limits of the Company's charter,<sup>3</sup> and the decision was never again revoked.

Contemporary with this controversy the Company became engaged in a conflict with the merchants who traded to Italy. The navigation act of 1660 had prohibited the import of all foreign goods into England unless they came direct from the port or places where they were produced, grown, or manufactured; but a clause in the act made an exception in the case of commodities coming

<sup>1</sup> See *Reasons for preserving the publick market of Blackwell Hall; An account of the number of woollen cloths, &c.; An historical view of the conduct and proceedings of the Turkey Company; Reasons for passing the bill intituled 'An act for enlarging and regulating the trade to the Levant seas'*. Even as early as 1680 complaints were being made of the delay and expense of taking cloth to London to be exported to Turkey. See the pamphlet *Britannia Languens*.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 153-5.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 21.

from the straits and from the Levant. These might be laden at the usual ports even though they did not originate there. The intention was to benefit the Levant Company which at that time carried Turkish goods, and especially silk, not only to England, but also to Italy and to France, and the provision afforded it a loophole—if for any reason it could not vend its commodities in these countries—to relade them and bring them to England.

But in time this clause became a means whereby a huge wedge was driven into the supposed monopoly of the Levant Company. This arose from the position occupied by Leghorn as the funnel through which the Turkey trade of the British, French, and Dutch all ran. Even as early as 1672 the Company was complaining that the Dutch were buying English cloth at Leghorn and carrying it to Smyrna, than which 'nothing can be more pernicious to the well-being of our trade'.<sup>1</sup> Thirty years later the menace had developed in the reverse direction. The French, Dutch, Italians, and Jews had begun to carry cargoes from the Levant to Leghorn, and there the goods were purchased by the Italian merchants and sent to England. Thus the Turkey Company was subjected to interloping competition in the home market, while in the Levant the trade of its rivals flourished on the brisk business done through Leghorn, and it was consequently found impossible to barter English cloth with the same facility as had formerly existed. At the same time, after the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, Louis XIV forbade the import of Turkish goods into France by English merchants,<sup>2</sup> so that one of the chief reasons for the loophole left in the navigation act ceased to exist. In 1710 and 1711 the Company petitioned the queen that efforts might be made to secure the removal of this embargo and the restoration of the former 'beneficial' trade with France by the peace treaty which was then being negotiated, but the final settlement at Utrecht failed to accomplish this.<sup>3</sup>

Anxiety was expressed about the ill effects of the indirect trade in Levant goods via Leghorn as early as 1700, and there was talk of applying to parliament to stop it;<sup>4</sup> but it was not until 1719 that

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 113. Company to Harvey, Mar. 11, 1671/2.

<sup>2</sup> By the Decree of Sept. 6, 1701, which Masson (*18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 130) calls 'Veritable Acte de Navigation'. It forbade the English, under threat of confiscation, to convey to French ports goods other than those produced in their own country.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations*, 1709-15, pp. 145, 321.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 156, Mar. 31, 1700; Sept. 13, 1705; *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations*, 1704-9, p. 203.

the Company presented a petition praying for the repeal of the clause in the navigation act which had made it possible, and for the prohibition of the importing of all Turkish commodities which did not come direct from the Levant. Its case was backed by a number of pamphlets asserting that the increased quantity of silk imported from Leghorn in the past few years had come from Marseilles and was the product of the French cloth trade with Turkey, and not of an increased vent of English cloth in Italy, since exports thither had actually decreased in the last three years; but all that was secured was an act to the effect desired by the Company covering only the import of silk and mohair. Other articles such as cottons, drugs, and dyes, could still be conveyed to England via Leghorn, and even the act itself was evaded for the raw silk which was taken from Turkey to Italy by foreigners was frequently sent on to England under pretence of being Italian silk.<sup>1</sup> This competition was one of the causes which contributed to the decline of the Company's trade in the middle of the century.

That decline began to cause serious concern from about 1730 onwards. The average annual imports and exports of the Company, which during the decade 1714-23 reached £290,523 and £213,755 respectively, and which in the next similar period (1724-33) stood at £278,629 and £212,365 dropped in the years 1734-43 to £181,985 and £151,874. The following decade (1744-53) saw a further slump to £170,164 and £121,421.<sup>2</sup> The figures for the cloth exported during the period 1734-43 show an approximate annual average of 11,246 of all kinds of cloths, a reduction of from 5,000 to 7,000 per annum from the earlier traffic of the Company.<sup>3</sup> In 1700 long cloths to the value of £190,611 15s. and short cloths worth £16,343 15s. had been exported. The corresponding figures for 1750 were £111,200 and £25,328, and for 1775, £35,184 and £44,000.<sup>4</sup> This shrinkage reacted upon the Company's finances, and in order to pay its way the consulage levied in the Levant had in 1744 to be raised to the unprecedented figure of 4 per cent. on imports and 7 per cent. on exports, while

<sup>1</sup> On the whole question see: *The case of the Levant Company, &c.; The case fairly stated between the Turkey Company and the Italian merchants; The Turkey merchants and their trade vindicated; An answer to the false suggestions of the Italian merchants, &c.; The further answer of the Turkey merchants, &c.; Considerations on the dispute between the Levant Company and the Italian merchants*; S.P. 105. 184, ff. 125-30; *Statutes at large*, v, pp. 298-9.

<sup>2</sup> I have arrived at these figures from Whitworth.

<sup>3</sup> Figures from *A proof of the decay of the Turkey trade*.

<sup>4</sup> Addit. MSS. 38349, f. 341.

double impositions were also charged on goods brought into England.<sup>1</sup> During the next thirty years the decline proceeded without interruption. The average annual imports and exports for the years 1754-63 dropped to £130,028 and £71,337; in the following ten years they were £135,119 and £76,461 and between 1774 and 1783 they reached only £105,477 and £88,065.<sup>2</sup> In sixty years the Company's trade had thus shrunk to nearly one-third of its volume in 1720; and the letters of the ambassadors at Constantinople in the middle of the century were full of laments about the deplorable state of their employer's affairs, until in 1768 James Porter could write, 'commerce will have its ebb and flow, but this branch has sunk to such a degree that the channel remains almost without hope of replenishing'.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally the causes of this collapse were studied and discussed, and some efforts were made to remove them, but for the most part they lay beyond any hope of remedy. The most outstanding reason was the progress which the French continued to make. After the Spanish Succession war, while the trade of the English remained stationary, the annual imports of France from the Levant, which had dropped to about five millions of livres during the war, rose to over twenty millions<sup>4</sup> and these imports were being paid for in a rapidly increasing degree by the export of French cloth.<sup>5</sup> 'The quantity of cloth they (the French) now send to Turkey', the Levant Company stated in 1719, 'is very considerable, to the no small prejudice of the English, which, with the large sums of bullion they also send thither, enables them to buy great quantities of new silk etc. and renders the barter of English cloth against the same silk difficult and disadvantageous'.<sup>6</sup>

In 1721 English cloth still enjoyed the best reputation and sold the dearest;<sup>7</sup> but the French studied the requirements of their customers better and won ground steadily. Their cloth was lighter, thinner, of softer wool, and more suitable to the climate in the Levant, and its colours were bright and varied. Above all, thanks to the large supplies of cheap Spanish wool which was available,

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> From Whitworth.

<sup>3</sup> Porter, *State of the Turkey Commerce*, p. 361.

<sup>4</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 343-4, 351-2; *Ibid.*, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 409-10.

<sup>5</sup> According to Masson (*18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 476-7) the annual export of French cloth rose from about 10,000 pieces per annum between 1700 and 1705 to 30,000 in the seventeen-twenties.

<sup>6</sup> *Reasons for the bill now depending, &c.*, 1719.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 97. 24. Stanyan to Carteret, Apr. 30, 1721.

to extensive government support, and to their greater proximity to the market,<sup>1</sup> the French clothiers could sell their wares at a figure too low for the English to compete. In 1749 Porter estimated that French cloth was 10 per cent. cheaper than that sent out from England, and pointed out what an enormous obstacle this was, for 'a common Turk is the most penurious self-denying creature existing with whom a single asper is of value'.<sup>2</sup> At Constantinople, and in Egypt, English cloth continued to be bought by people of high rank who were prepared to pay the higher price for a superior article,<sup>3</sup> but the wider trade in coarser cheaper cloth fell more and more into French hands.

In 1739 and again in 1740 the Levant Company addressed the Duke of Newcastle<sup>4</sup> upon the great increase in the French cloth trade and upon the danger of England being driven entirely out of that branch of her commerce. At that time the French were importing annually 12,000 cloths to Constantinople, 7,000 to Smyrna, and 5,000 to Aleppo, while at each place there were large quantities of English cloth lying unsold.<sup>5</sup> The Company suggested the payment of a bounty on the export of English cloth to the Levant and that the duties on Turkish silk and grograms imported into England should be lowered as means of helping the trade—but the board of trade, to whom the memorials were referred, questioned whether these expedients would be practicable, though it confessed that it could make no alternative suggestions.<sup>6</sup>

In this same year (1740) the French secured another great advantage over their rivals. Their ambassador the Marquis de Villeneuve had accomplished one of the most brilliant diplomatic coups of the century in 1739 when he succeeded in mediating a favourable peace for the Turks with Austria and Russia at Belgrade, and the fruits of his skill were reaped in the following year when he renewed the French capitulations. By two new clauses he then secured the reduction of the customs duties on French cloth in Turkey from 40 to 30 dollars the bale of 20 pieces, and also the total abolition

<sup>1</sup> It was estimated that the French could make three voyages to one of the English.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 34. Porter to Bedford, Feb. 22, 1749.

<sup>3</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 38. Hasselquist describes the French cloth as 'thin and wretched'.

<sup>4</sup> Secretary of State for the Southern Department in whose province Turkey lay.

<sup>5</sup> These addresses are in Addit. MSS. 33052, ff. 181-2; 38330, ff. 240-1. In 1700, 3,000 cloths were being manufactured in Languedoc. By 1740 the number had risen to 80,000 (*Hanway*, ii, p. 55).

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 97. 56. Report of the Board of Trade, Oct. 9, 1740.

on all French goods of the misteria duty.<sup>1</sup> The English Levant merchants had no similar claims to such favours and they could not in any case afford the expense of trying to secure them; but Villeneuve's triumph served to tilt the scales still more sharply against them.<sup>2</sup>

By 1744 the French had more than 200 vessels of large size, as well as 400-500 smaller ones, engaged in the Turkey trade, whereas the English seldom sent more than ten ships annually to the Levant;<sup>3</sup> and during the following years, while English trade declined sharply, that of the French rose with extraordinary rapidity. By 1740 their exports had equalled the imports from Turkey and the total trade was worth 30 million livres per annum; twenty years later imports had risen to 27 million livres and exports to 20 millions; and after the American war imports exceeded 36 million livres, though exports had dropped to 14 millions as a result of the exhaustion of the Turks which followed their war with Russia (1768-74) and of the competition of the Austrian and German cloth which was beginning to reach the Levant via Trieste and overland through the Balkans.<sup>4</sup> French cloth exports, which averaged 58,000 pieces per annum for the years 1736-41, rose to an average of 85,300 pieces in the period 1763-73, and on the eve of the Revolution it was estimated that France possessed three-fifths of the total European trade with Turkey and the English only one-fifth.<sup>5</sup> Writing from Constantinople in 1749 Porter said that in the previous twenty-five years the French imports of cloth there had increased as nine to one. Instead of 100 bales they were then selling from 900 to 1,000 per annum. Of the English trade he painted a dismal picture. 'Trade at this scale is so decreased that there is scarce a currency for our cloth. Our last seven years' exports do not amount to one-half of the former, nor to a third of what preceded these two periods; from 800 bales annually we are reduced to 180 or 200.' At Smyrna matters were worse, for in that year (1749) not one single bale of cloth had arrived through

<sup>1</sup> This was 2½ dollars per bale of cloth and 1½ per cent. *ad valorem* on all goods sold by weight.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 56. Company to Newcastle, Sept. 9, 1740; Vandal, *Villeneuve*, pp. 416-20. The capitulations of 1740 are printed in full in Saint-Priest.

<sup>3</sup> *Short remarks on the Turkey trade*.

<sup>4</sup> These cloths, called Leipsicks, and made especially around Aix-la-Chapelle, appeared in the Levant in 1785, and their sale was helped by the discredit into which French cloth was beginning to fall (see below, pp. 186-7). Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 395.

<sup>5</sup> Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 412-16, 476-8.

the mere want of an outlet, while at Aleppo, though some trade was still kept going by the demand for silk, even this had decreased by one-half.<sup>1</sup> The four ships per annum which it had been usual to send to each of these two last factories thirty years earlier had dropped by now to one each, and the amount of cloth sold through them had been cut down to about a third of what it had formerly been.<sup>2</sup>

The lucrative trade which the French had developed between the Levant and Leghorn has already been mentioned. An equally prosperous enterprise began when they started to send some of their colonial products to Turkey. Villeneuve got coffee from the French American islands admitted to Turkey on more advantageous terms than that which came through Egypt and the Levant market was soon flooded with this colonial coffee, and with indigo and sugar from the same source.<sup>3</sup> In 1746 Stanhope Aspinwall wrote from Constantinople that the French 'have in a manner engross'd all the trade. The Turks are used to see whole fleets of their merchant vessels in their ports which makes them appear more considerable than other nations; and indeed the Turk can neither be cloathed (at the price and in the manner they wish) nor have coffee to drink without them.'<sup>4</sup>

Even the trade of the Dutch which had languished for fifty years began to revive again at the expense of their old rivals. In 1721 it was so small that it was thought that the Republic would not find it worth while to replace its existing ambassador when he died,<sup>5</sup> but by 1765 the Hollanders had won a substantial footing in the cloth trade with the Levant. At Constantinople, where in 1754 they had not sold fifteen bales of cloth, they were then selling a hundred, and a similar increase had taken place at Smyrna.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 34. Porter to Bedford, Feb. 22, 1749.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 367-8. At Smyrna the cloth exports fell from 3,000 bales per annum to 500-1,000 and at Aleppo from 3,000 to 600-700. In 1765 the English at Aleppo were only importing about 500 bales of cloth per annum against 1,500 bales by the French (S.P. 105. 184, pp. 128-9).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 30. Fawkener to Newcastle, Mar. 15, 1739; *Some remarks on a late pamphlet, &c.; The case of the governor and company of merchants, &c.*; S.P. 105. 333, p. 21. According to Saint-Priest (p. 322) this French colonial coffee was first sent to the Levant about 1727.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 32. Stanhope Aspinwall to Newcastle, June 24, 1746.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 24. Stanyan to Carteret, Apr. 30, 1721. In 1739 the Dutch suppressed their consulate at Aleppo—where their trade had diminished almost to nothing—and put themselves under the protection of the English consul. They had a consul at Salonika, but did only a trifling trade there (Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 376-7).

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 184, ff. 125-7. At this time the Dutch had eight or ten 'considerable houses' in Smyrna (Postlethwayt, ii, p. 73).



Like the French they had also pushed their way into the Leghorn trade and were indirectly supplying the English market with Levant goods through the Italian merchants.<sup>1</sup>

The distracted condition of Persia in the first half of the eighteenth century was another of the circumstances which exercised an adverse influence upon the English Levant trade, and in particular upon the factory at Aleppo. The wars between Russia and Persia, and Peter the Great's conquest of the province of Ghilan, whence most of the silk came, in 1722 diminished the culture of raw silk and cut down the traffic in it which had formerly been done through Smyrna and Aleppo,<sup>2</sup> while the struggle between Nadir Shah and the Turks, which arose out of the Russo-Turkish agreement to partition Persia in 1723, still further obstructed the flow of commerce to the Levant ports. When Nadir Shah was murdered in 1747 Persia lapsed for many years into a condition of anarchy which made any settled trade impossible and depopulated large areas of the country. Hasselquist found that the silk trade at Aleppo was 'entirely at a stand',<sup>3</sup> and it was stated that between 1750 and 1765 no Persian silk was seen there, a stoppage from which the Smyrna factory also suffered.<sup>4</sup> Even a restoration of order in the shah's dominions would have been of little benefit to the Levant Company for the English East India merchants had by now firmly established themselves at Bassora, which quickly supplanted Aleppo as the main channel for the barter of English cloth and Persian silk. The Turkey Company protested against this establishment of its rivals as an infringement of its monopoly, and petitioned the king, but apparently without success.<sup>5</sup>

Still another menace to the old supremacy which the Turkey Company had enjoyed in the Persian market came from the north. In 1739 John Elton, who had already spent four years in exploring

<sup>1</sup> Addit. MSS. 38375, ff. 81-90.

<sup>2</sup> At Aleppo alone the English had formerly purchased 1,000 bales (worth £100 per bale) per annum of Persian silk (*Reasons against the bill now depending in parliament*, &c., p. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Hasselquist, pp. 399-400.

<sup>4</sup> Hanway, ii, pp. 50, 102, 107; *The case of the governor and company of merchants of England*, &c.; S.P. 105. 184, ff. 128-9; Chandler, pp. 73-4.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 119, pp. 160-1, 267, 281. S.P. 105. 184, pp. 128-9. The Company's trade in silk was also affected by the growing use of cotton in place of silk stockings. In the five years 1734-8, 883,505 lb. of raw silk (an annual average of 176,701 lb.) were imported from Turkey. During the period 1756-60 the annual average import of silk from Turkey was 133,062 lb., from the East Indies 109,401 lb., from Italy 75,059 lb. For the years 1772-6 the corresponding figures were 103,301 lb., 319,939 lb., and 105,809 lb. (*Reasons for passing the bill . . . for enlarging and regulating the trade to the Levant seas*; Addit. MS. 38348, f. 109).

and mapping the area of the Caspian Sea, led an expedition from Moscow, where the English Muscovy Company had a factory, to that region with the intention of opening up an overland trade with Persia. He penetrated as far as Resht, sold his merchandise profitably, and received from the regent, the shah's son, the right to trade in Persia on the same terms as the natives enjoyed. Armed with these privileges he returned to St. Petersburg and urged upon the English ambassador there the desirability of developing this new trade route which, so he asserted, would afford a great market for English woollen goods on more beneficial terms than that hitherto afforded by the Turkey Company's trade to Persia since the freight charges on cloth through Russia were cheaper than on those going through Turkey.

The project was forwarded to London and favourably reported on by the commissioners for trade, but the Russian Company could do nothing until parliament gave it exemption from the clause of the navigation act which prohibited the import of any foreign goods into England 'except from those ports where the said goods or commodities can only, are, or usually have been first shipped for transportation'. This was held to limit the traffic in Persian goods either to Gombroon or to the Levant ports. The Turkey merchants strenuously resisted this new threat to their trade, while the Muscovy Company retaliated by attacking the monopoly of its rivals and by reviving the criticisms made in 1718, at the time of the agitation against general shipping, in order to prove how prejudicial to the national interest it was, and in the end it secured the victory, for the Turkey Company was unable to stop the passing of an act of parliament in 1740 authorizing the Russian merchants to import raw silk or any other Persian goods through Russia provided that they had been purchased by the barter of cloth or other English commodities, and not by the export of gold or silver bullion.

The Levant merchants regarded this as 'a very great blow given to our trade',<sup>1</sup> and the Muscovy Company at once made efforts to open up the new channel of commerce. But it met with only moderate and temporary success. Elton, who was sent out, soon quarrelled with the Russian authorities, and entered the service of Nadir Shah, a step which so alienated the former that in 1746 the Czarina prohibited the Caspian trade to all English on account of his behaviour, in which some of the factors who had gone with

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 117. Company to Fawkener, Aug. 20, 1741.

him were suspected of being mixed. After the death of Nadir Shah the English at Resht were plundered by Persian rebels of £80,000 worth of goods, and failing to get any redress they withdrew to St. Petersburg. The disordered condition of Persia made impossible any further efforts to establish direct contact of this kind; but in 1750 the Muscovy Company obtained an act of parliament permitting the import of raw silk and other articles purchased in Russia from Russians and Armenians who had procured them in Persia.<sup>1</sup> Probably this had little effect upon the trade in Persian silk done by the Levant Company, for it is not mentioned in the exhaustive representations upon the causes of the decline of the Turkey trade sent in by the factories of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Aleppo in 1765;<sup>2</sup> but the traffic in rhubarb—which had formerly been a lucrative one—was almost entirely diverted through Russia.<sup>3</sup>

The long wars with Spain and France in the eighteenth century also contributed to depress the Levant trade. The struggles beginning in 1739 and 1756 both opened with misfortunes at sea, which made the Mediterranean unsafe for English shipping,<sup>4</sup> and the result was at once visible in the figures of the Turkey Company's trade. Exports to Turkey in 1739 and 1741 dropped to £35,211 and £61,708, while in 1742 only £7,498 worth of goods were imported. In 1758 imports and exports totalled no more than £29,294 and £9,588. But in these wars England did in the end re-establish her mastery of the seas and emerge victorious. The loss of naval supremacy in the American war 1776–83 told much more heavily upon the Levant traders. Ainslie wrote in 1779 that trade had been totally interrupted and that not a single English ship had reached Constantinople for eight months.<sup>5</sup> In the four years 1779–83 direct imports from Turkey averaged only £17,333 and exports £1,959 per annum.<sup>6</sup> French trade also suffered during these wars by the presence of English fleets in the Mediterranean,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Act of 1740 applied only to Persian goods purchased in Persia in return for British goods sold there. <sup>2</sup> They are in S.P. 105. 184. ff. 125–30.

<sup>3</sup> I have taken my account of this episode from Hanway.

<sup>4</sup> In the years 1756–60 French privateers were estimated to have captured 2,539 British vessels (Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 346, note 2).

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 55. Ainslie to Weymouth, Feb. 3, 1779.

<sup>6</sup> I have arrived at these figures from those given by Whitworth and Macpherson; but owing to the relaxation of the navigation acts during the war (see below, p. 158) they do not represent the full value of the traffic done in Levant goods during this period.

<sup>7</sup> According to Masson (*18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 412–13) in the Austrian Succession

but despite this some of it was preserved by a simple expedient. Normally the traffic between France and Turkey was restricted rigidly to French citizens, but in the wars of the eighteenth century it was thrown open to all. The result was that Swedish, Dutch, and Neapolitan vessels plied between Marseilles and the Levant under cover of their neutral flags carrying French produce and property. Even some of the English Levant merchants began to purchase French cloth at Marseilles or Leghorn and send it in neutral ships to Turkey until the Company prohibited it in 1758.<sup>1</sup> Thus although the shipping of France suffered her cloth manufacturers were kept busy and the trade with Turkey was not wholly throttled.<sup>2</sup>

A further disability was provided throughout these wars by the activities of English privateers in the eastern Mediterranean. In their attacks on French and Spanish shipping they showed scant respect for Turkish passengers or their goods, and the Porte was besieged by petitions and protests from subjects who had been plundered or ill-treated. The French ambassadors, whose influence was generally supreme in the divan, took care to foment the trouble, and sharp exchanges of protests and even threats took place between the grand viziers and the English ambassadors. It was impossible to control the privateers though the government did make some efforts to do so, and the Levant Company, fearing for the safety of its factors and goods in Turkey if the sultan's wrath was too deeply aroused, had no choice but to reimburse many of the complainants and purchase their silence at high rates. With declining trade it could no longer meet this additional burden and was obliged to borrow money at 10 per cent. in Turkey. At Constantinople alone it owed £12,000 in 1748, and Porter told Newcastle that it was 'without money and greatly distress'd' and unless helped was threatened with 'unavoidable decay'.<sup>3</sup>

Two smaller difficulties, to which the Company also attributed the decline of the trade, remain to be mentioned. One

war French imports from the Levant fell to seven and a half million livres—one-half the average—and in the Seven Years' war to 5½ millions—one quarter of the normal amount at that time.

<sup>1</sup> In S.P. 110. 34 is a letter dated July 30, 1757, from an Aleppo factor to his principal advising him 'to make a further trial of the French cloth, which can be bought cheap at Marseilles and will give you a better profit than English'.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 32. Aspinwall to Newcastle, Sept. 24, 1745; S.P. 105. 211, order of the company. Nov. 14, 1758; S.P. 105. 121, p. 18; F.O. 78. 2. Ainslie to Hillsborough, June 26, 1781.

<sup>3</sup> On the question of the privateers, see Porter's letters in S.P. 97. 33.

was a decrease, by at least a half, in the consumption of certain drugs and galls imported from Turkey, and of mohair yarn. This last was used in the making of button and button-holes until the new fashion for metal buttons lowered the demand for it.<sup>1</sup> Formerly it had also been employed in the manufacture of silk stuffs (being mixed with the silk), but this also had stopped. The result was felt in a catastrophic diminution of imports. In 1697, 514,981 lb. of mohair (valued at £109,403 9s. 6d.) were imported. For 1775 the corresponding figures were 82,035 lb. (valued at £57,362 5s.) while in 1786 only 11,476 lb. were brought in.<sup>2</sup> The other obstacle was the absence of any facilities in England for ships to perform quarantine, and the passing of an act in 1753 prohibiting any goods from the Levant to be landed in England without a clean bill of health from the consul in the port where they had been laded, unless they had been aired in one of the lazarettos of Malta, Venice, Ancona, Messina, Leghorn, Genoa, or Marseilles.<sup>3</sup> The result was that when plague was reported the property of the merchants had to be locked up in the warehouses in the Levant, trade came to a standstill, the Turks did not get their regular supplies of English goods, and so other nations stepped in and secured the market. In the Levant a clean bill of health was only issued forty days after the cessation of the plague, while in the Mediterranean lazarettos the period of quarantine ranged from ninety-five days to seven months. Hence the Company's goods were frequently detained for long spells of time, and the delay had a further deleterious effect upon the trade between England and Spain and Portugal in fabrics made from mohair yarn which naturally suffered from these long stoppages of supplies. The Dutch, in particular, were quick to profit from this disadvantage of their rivals. They spread false reports of plague in order to hold up the English ships, and as their own vessels loaded in plague time and were subjected only to a loose quarantine of forty days in Holland, they possessed a great advantage which was of especial benefit to them in the trade in cotton wool. Early in George III's reign it had been made possible to import cotton wool into England from any port, and thanks to the advantage which they possessed in the Levant trade large supplies of cotton soon began to reach English shores through Dutch sources. In 1792 it was stated that more

<sup>1</sup> Macpherson, iii, p. 241; Hanway, ii, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Statutes at Large*, vii, pp. 466-72.

<sup>3</sup> Addit. MSS. 38348, f. 110; 38349, f. 345.

than half the cotton from Turkey consumed in England was thus supplied by Holland.<sup>1</sup>

The house of commons addressed the king in 1752 urging the building of a lazaretto on Chetney Hill, on the River Medway, and in 1765 actually voted £5,000 for building it; but the depressed state of the Turkey trade prevented anything from being done, for it was argued that the project would impose considerable expense upon the nation, which did not reap any adequate return advantage from the traffic to the Levant. Indeed, far from being a profitable branch of the country's commerce the Company had shortly to be subsidized by a parliamentary grant in order to keep it afloat.<sup>2</sup> Not until 1799 was the quarantine act of 1753 superseded by a new statute which enabled goods to be landed in England without a clean bill of health, on condition that such regulations as should be made by the crown for the opening and airing of the same were observed.<sup>3</sup> This was followed in 1800 by another act authorizing the erection of a lazaretto on Chetney Hill, Kent, at a cost of £65,000.<sup>4</sup> As a temporary expedient the hulks of four old battle-ships were moored in Stangate creek and used for quarantine purposes, goods being transferred to them and aired on their decks, but the new building was finished by 1810 at a cost of £170,000. It was, however, almost at once condemned owing to its marshy foundations, and the use of floating hulks continued as before.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the adverse influences which have just been enumerated lay beyond the power of the Company to remove, but its critics always contended that the success of French competition and the diminution of English trade to the Levant was due rather to the errors of the Turkey Company and to its faulty organization than to these more general causes which it admittedly could not control. Thus it was accused of failing to adapt its goods to the market and to the new demands created by the advent of the lighter and brighter French cloth,<sup>6</sup> but supporters of the Company denied this, and its papers prove that genuine efforts were made to combat

<sup>1</sup> Addit. MSS. 38351, ff. 243-5. Memo. of the Levant Co. to Pitt 1792; *ibid.*, ff. 252-4, extract of a letter from the consul and factory at Smyrna.

<sup>2</sup> See later, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Statutes at Large*, xviii, p. 186; Act to Encourage the Trade to the Levant Seas, 1799.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 400-9.

<sup>5</sup> Addit. MSS. 38351, ff. 255-7; S.P. 105. 184, ff. 125-30; *ibid.*, 121, pp. 387-91; Semple, ii, p. 237; *Encyclop. Brit.*, article on 'Quarantine'.

<sup>6</sup> Hanway, ii, p. 55.

French rivalry. The factors in the Levant studied the psychology of the market carefully and were repeatedly sending home hints of the colour, size, and quality of the cloth required and even of the character of the wrappings needed to catch the eyes of their customers,<sup>1</sup> while in England many attempts seem to have been made to imitate French cloth, patterns, and even the yarn of which it was made, being brought over for that purpose. But the fineness of the materials and of the spinning proved insurmountable difficulties, and although the English clothiers did in fact produce thinner and cheaper cloth, its quality was so inferior that the Levant merchants were afraid to meddle with it.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand there was probably some truth in the criticism that a narrow monopolistic spirit had deliberately cramped the trade and that the Company's organization added further shackles. In practice only merchants (i.e. retailers were excluded) who were freemen of London were eligible for membership, and in the early eighteenth century the Company consisted of about 200 members.<sup>3</sup> In the 44 years from 1710 to 1754 only about 140 new freemen were elected and between 70 and 80 factors in the Levant were given liberty to trade.<sup>4</sup> These scanty admissions, which can hardly have sufficed to make up the leakage caused by death, can no doubt be partially explained by the declining state of the Company's affairs, but even when allowance has been made for that they seem to lend some proof to the charge of selfish exclusiveness so insistently brought against the managers of the trade. From the register of impositions paid during the years 1731-6 it appears that the members who were actually engaged in trading did not number more than 50 or 60, and it was widely believed that this handful of monopolists deliberately curbed all initiative, enterprise, and expansion in pursuit of high profits on a limited business.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the development of new scales

<sup>1</sup> See Ambrose, G., 'English traders at Aleppo', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Oct. 1931, pp. 248-9.

<sup>2</sup> *The case of the governor and company of merchants, &c.; Reasons against the bill now depending, &c.*

<sup>3</sup> Chardin (p. 5) says that the Company consisted of 300 members in the 1670's. In their petition against the East India Co. in 1681 the Levant merchants said they numbered 500, but their rivals asserted that this was 'an error in their muster by at least one-half' (*Allegations of the Turkey Company, &c.*). A list of members in 1701 gives 214 names (Bodleian Pamphlets Folio 665, ff. 97-8). In 1720 the Company stated that it had 200 members (Macpherson, iii, p. 115).

<sup>4</sup> I have arrived at these figures from the admissions given in S.P. 105. 332, 333.

<sup>5</sup> This criticism, that the policy of the Company aimed at a big profit on a

was discouraged, and it seems probable that prices and profits were kept up to a rate which inevitably curtailed the flow of trade. It was at least significant—and no satisfactory explanation of the fact was ever given—that Levant goods which had passed through French or Dutch hands via Italy could be sold cheaper in England than those imported by the Company direct.

The attacks on the practice of general shipping have already been noticed. The limitation of the trade to the port of London, which followed from that practice was another aspect of the Company's organization which evoked criticism, for not only did it add to the price of the goods exported the cost of conveying them there, but the expenses of portage, loading, victualling, and manning of ships, and the customs house fees were all said to be higher in London than elsewhere. So it was argued that if the trade was freed such goods as iron, steel, brass, copper, cutlery, and Birmingham ware could be exported through the outports much more cheaply than from London, and the clothiers asserted that they could compete successfully with the French if their goods could be shipped from any port, and they were spared the necessity of sending their cloth up to London to be dyed hurriedly at exorbitant rates before shipment.<sup>1</sup> But the failure of the trade to develop through the outports after the abolition of general shipping and the enlargement of the terms of admission in 1744 and 1753 seems to prove that these criticisms were exaggerated.

Another by-law of the Company passed in 1744 forced members to make all purchases in the Levant with the proceeds or by the barter of goods exported from England, and forbade the sending to Turkey of any coin or bullion because 'it has been found by long experience that it has been a means of greatly enhancing the price of commodities in Turkey to the great prejudice of the trade in general'.<sup>2</sup> Articles sent out to be sold for cash in order to purchase return cargoes were known as 'money goods'.<sup>3</sup> This regulation, which was not suspended until 1791,<sup>4</sup> was assailed by critics on the ground that it hampered trade and played into the restricted trade, was echoed in France by the economist Forbonnais. See Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 371.

<sup>1</sup> *Reflections on the expediency of opening the trade to Turkey*; Postlethwayt, ii, pp. 384–6. Similar complaints had been made in the previous century by the clothiers and others against the Merchant Adventurers (Lipson, ii, p. 244).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> At Aleppo, indigo, pepper, cochineal, sugar, and tin were recommended as suitable 'money goods'.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 121, p. 337.



hands of the French and Dutch who carried out large quantities of coin to the Levant, for the Turk preferred to sell rather than barter his goods. The outcome was that while the Company's trade languished that of its rivals prospered, and Levant commodities were brought to England in increasing quantities either via Leghorn or by the Dutch.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the opponents of the Company advised the throwing open of the Turkey trade as the best remedy for its declining condition—a proposal which had first been suggested in 1719 at the time of the dispute with the Italian merchants.<sup>2</sup> During the next twenty years the idea gained ground as the trade continued to decline, and criticism was directed against the alleged monopolistic spirit of the Company. In 1729 the weavers of Worcester—most of whose cloth went to Turkey—complained to the house of commons that they were reduced to poverty by want of trade, the reason being that the Levant merchants monopolized to themselves the liberty of buying their cloth when and at what price they pleased; and in 1743 a cascade of petitions fell upon the table of the house from the clothiers of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Exeter, Oxford, Wakefield, Bradford (Wilts.), Trowbridge, the silk weavers of London and Macclesfield and the corporation of Hull—all complaining of the decay of exports to the Levant, attributing it to the exclusive privileges of the Company, and praying for the opening of the trade to Turkey.<sup>3</sup> This was held to be impracticable, but the opponents of the Company succeeded in 1744 in introducing a bill 'for enlarging and regulating the trade to the Levant seas' which was meant to be a compromise. It proposed that in future all subjects of the realm should be eligible for admission to the Company on payment of £20 and on taking the usual oath of the freeman. The sons of apprentices or persons already free in 1744 were only to pay 20s. for their freedom. Any one free of the Company was to be allowed to import or export at will—that is to say, the system of general shipping was to be prohibited for the future.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the memorial of 1782 in Addit. MSS. 38375, ff. 81–90.

<sup>2</sup> In *The case fairly stated*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the house of commons*, xxi, Feb. 26, 1728/9; xxiv, Feb. 16, 28, 29, Mar. 5, 7, 8, 13. The coincidence of these petitions and the wide area from which they were drawn seems to indicate that there was some organization behind the movement against the Company.

<sup>4</sup> This threat probably explains the decision of the Company in 1744 to drop the system of general shipping.

This bill passed the lower house but was thrown out by the lords by three votes after a lengthy debate. Those who assailed the Company emphasized its narrow and exclusive character and attributed the decline of the Turkey trade to the great profits made by a small ring of monopolists. The managers and directors of the Company had, according to Lord Sandys, for many years controlled the entire trade for themselves and their friends through the appointment of the general ships, and by the high prices they had demanded for English goods in Turkey had opened the way for the French to capture the market. As wool in France cost 2s. per lb. as against 9d. in England, and labour was no dearer in the latter country, it was clear that the Company ought to have been able to undersell French cloth. The same insistence upon large profits had also checked the consumption of Turkish goods in England and made it possible for silk and mohair, taken by the French to Leghorn and passed on through the Italian merchants to England, to be sold cheaper than those imported by the Company direct. All the supporters of the bill stressed this point, and Sandys wound up the debate with a concise summary of their contention: 'monopolizers will always make great profits both upon what they buy and what they sell; that is the true cause of the decay of our Turkey trade. . . . If there had been no monopoly of our Turkey trade the French would never have thought of, much less succeeded in becoming our rivals.'

Partisans of the Company contested these arguments.<sup>1</sup> It was claimed that labour was very much cheaper in France, which enabled the French to undersell English cloth, and that the Turkey merchants had been 'at great pains' to get the English manufacturers to produce fabrics as light and brightly coloured as those of their rivals. The idea that a small caucus of big men dominated the trade was denied by the Earl of Sandwich who said that more than fifty merchants in London were concerned in it and that in the Levant, far from the English houses working together in a lucrative conspiracy, there were such differences between them that the factors, even in the same city, sometimes neither visited nor conversed with each other. Fears were expressed that if the borders of the Company were widened and 'low tradesmen and shopkeepers' were allowed to go out and settle in Turkey it would occasion continual disputes with the Turks and might even lead

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Bedford and Lord Delawar (the governor of the Company) were the chief speakers in its defence.

to the withdrawal of the capitulations. But what seems to have been the decisive factor in securing the rejection of the bill was the alarm aroused by the proposal of a reorganization which would make possible the admission of Jews to the Company.<sup>1</sup> In the Levant Jew brokers acted as intermediaries between the English factors and their Turkish customers, and it was feared, if English Jews secured entry to the Company and settled in Turkey as factors, that they and their Levantine brethren would organize a monopoly of the trade and squeeze the Christian merchants out of it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hitherto they had been excluded from the Company by the clause in the charter of Charles II which compelled all merchants living within a twenty-mile radius of London to take up the freedom of the city before they could secure admission to the Company. In the capital great jealousy had been shown of the Jews since their return to England, and by the by-laws of the city it was made impossible for a Jew to take up his livery or freedom—a disability which also debarred him from entering the Levant Company (Blunt, *History of the Jews in England*, p. 119; Hyamson, *History of the Jews in England*, p. 259).

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xiii, pp. 895-963; Hanway, ii, pp. 54-70.

## IX

### DECLINE (*continued*)

FOR the moment the agitation died down, but it revived again nine years later, and a new shower of petitions to the house of commons showed how widespread was the feeling in favour of opening, or at least making access more easy to, the Levant trade. They came in from Liverpool, Bristol, Yarmouth, Wilton, Chippenham, Dumfries, King's Lynn, Calne, Heytesbury, Taunton, Hampton, Nailsworth, Norwich, Woodchester, Chester, Wotton-under-Edge, Bradford (Wilts.), Salisbury, Shepton Mallet, Warrington, Kendal, Corsham, Wakefield, Leeds, Hull, Lancaster, Gloucester, Halifax, Cockermouth, Macclesfield, Rochdale, Bury, and Haslingden;<sup>1</sup> and they clearly represented a striking unanimity of opinion throughout the ports and cloth-manufacturing areas of the country. The petitions repeated the accusation that the declining export of cloth to Turkey was due to the monopoly of the Levant Company and to its large profits; and nine more years of dwindling trade had by now reduced the Turkey commerce to such a state that the plea for remedial measures could no longer be ignored. In 1753 an act was therefore passed similar in intention to the bill which had been rejected in 1744.<sup>2</sup> The fee for admission to the Company was lowered to £20, and the old qualifications which required that candidates must be merchants and freemen of London was abolished. All subjects—including Jews and those who had been naturalized—were henceforth made eligible for admission; but the old fear of Jewish clannishness was echoed in the clause which forbade Jewish members of the Company to employ Jews as factors in the Levant. Another clause reflected the suspicion that in the past the Company had been run for their own benefit by a small group of powerful merchants. It provided that by-laws made by the general court must be confirmed by a subsequent general court held at least one month afterwards, and notice of all courts summoned to make such by-laws was to be given in the *London Gazette* at least 20 days in advance. If seven or more freemen felt that they had a grievance they could appeal to the commissioners for trade and plantations,

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the house of commons*, xxvi, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> *Statutes at Large*, vii, pp. 488–90.

who were empowered to hear the appeal and to confirm or quash the disputed regulation.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the older members withdrew from the Company when this act was passed,<sup>2</sup> but their loss was more than made up by the larger intake of new freemen which followed the lowering of the terms of entry. Between 1754 and 1794 about 352 admissions were made,<sup>3</sup> and by 1797 it was estimated that the Company contained 400 members.<sup>4</sup> Yet in spite of the changes introduced in 1753 the greater majority of the merchants, and of the trade they did, continued throughout the century to be concentrated in London. The traffic done by the outports with Turkey had always been negligible in extent. In 1697-8, when the customs returns begin, there were no imports to or exports from the outports; in 1700 coffee to the value of £18 8s. 7d. was imported and tin valued at £703 was exported via the outports; in 1750 some Cyprus wine valued at £13 11s. 6d. was imported in this way; and in 1770 exports from the outports (mainly tin) only reached the value of £3,520 16s. 3d. Such figures show how London monopolized the trade. The first association of Liverpool with the trade which I have found was in 1759 when a ship sailed from the Mersey for Smyrna and Constantinople,<sup>5</sup> but in the Company's register book for the eight years 1775-85 only three vessels are entered as discharging their cargoes at Liverpool; and it was not necessary to appoint collectors of the Company's dues in any of the outlying ports for nearly half a century after the enlargement of the terms of membership.

That enlargement, together with the abolition of general shipping, increased the number of vessels employed by the Company. The following figures taken from the Company's imposition books illustrate this expansion and shed an interesting light upon the distribution of the trade at that time. The predominant position of Smyrna, and the relative neglect of Constantinople and Scanderoon (for Aleppo) are especially noteworthy.

<sup>1</sup> The system of general shipping had been abolished by the Company in 1744, but the act of 1753 none the less contained a clause giving full freedom of exports both 'separately and jointly' to all members of the Company.

<sup>2</sup> Porter, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> These figures are from S.P. 105. 333, pp. 24-5, 72, 567.

<sup>4</sup> Beaujour, p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 110. 36, ? to Thomas Ashby at Galata, Sept. 21, 1759. In 1790 only one ship of 323 tons sailed from Liverpool for Turkey (Addit. MSS. 38351, f. 112).

## DECLINE

	<i>Year.</i>	<i>No. of ships on which Impositions were paid.</i>	<i>Ports of Origin.</i>
General ships.	1733	9	7 from Smyrna; 2 from Alexandria
	1734	10	6 from Smyrna; 1 from Alexandria; 3 from Scanderoon
	1735	7	3 from Scanderoon; 3 from Alexandria; 1 from Smyrna
	1736	15	10 from Smyrna; 3 from Acre; 1 from Alexandria; 1 from Cyprus
	1776 <sup>1</sup>	24	15 from Smyrna; 5 from Scanderoon; 2 from Salonika; 2 from Turkey (port not specified)
	1777	22	16 from Smyrna; 3 from Turkey; 2 from Scanderoon; 1 from Salonika
	1785	21	18 from Smyrna; 2 from Salonika; 1 from Scanderoon and Cyprus
	1790	29	22 from Smyrna; 3 from Salonika; 2 from Constantinople; 1 from Alexandria; 1 from Scanderoon
	1792	37	21 from Smyrna; 12 from Alexandria; 3 from Salonika; 1 from Scanderoon

Yet this widening of its basis did little to improve the deplorable state of the Company's trade. The figures for imports and exports showed no tendency to rise until the seventies, when for three years (1775-7) a short-lived boom was experienced. In 1775 exports reached a value of £226,997, and imports in the following year nearly touched a quarter of a million—figures which rivalled those of sixty years earlier. But the American war quickly broke this wave of prosperity and reduced the trade to desperate straits. To help it an act was passed in 1780 waiving the requirements of the navigation laws and permitting the import of Levant goods in British or foreign ships from any port during the war.<sup>2</sup> This made possible a certain amount of traffic through Holland (until war was declared on her in December 1780) and via Ostend. Goods were freighted in the Levant on Venetian ships—whose neutral flag covered their cargoes from the French fleet and privateers—and consigned to the neutral port of Ostend whence they could easily slip across to London.<sup>3</sup> The act produced some interesting

<sup>1</sup> The register books of impositions between 1737 and 1774 have not survived.

<sup>2</sup> The act was first limited to June 1, 1781, but it was subsequently extended to the duration of the war (*Statutes at Large*, xiii, pp. 568-9; xiv, pp. 32-3).

<sup>3</sup> Messrs. Frederico Rhomberg & Co. were one firm at Ostend to whom goods were consigned. A few foreign ships sailed direct to or from England. In 1781 one foreign vessel was entered outwards in London and one in the outports. In

petitions. Two of them—from Liverpool and from the cotton growers of the British West Indies—protested that the free import of cotton from any place within the Mediterranean would damage all who were interested in the trade to the West Indies. Another—from the tallow chandlers of London—supported the act because the wicks of wax and tallow candles were all made from cotton yarn spun from Levant cotton. West Indian cotton could not be used for this purpose; and it was stated that the annual consumption of Levant cotton wool for tallow candles alone was 500,000 lb.<sup>1</sup>

When the war ended trade revived slowly and a helpful fillip was given to it by Sir Robert Ainslie's success in securing the abolition of the misteria duty on English goods in 1784, a privilege which the French had enjoyed for over forty years;<sup>2</sup> but the average annual imports and exports for the decade 1784-93 only reached £182,569 and £114,476.<sup>3</sup> Moreover the competition which the Company had to encounter was steadily widening. The imports of cotton wool from Turkey had formed the only bright patch in its trade during these lean years; in 1750 it had brought in 598,605 lb. (worth £17,459 6s. 3d.) and in 1775 2,175,132 lb. (worth £63,441 7s.).<sup>4</sup> But cotton was now being poured into England, not only through Dutch sources, but also from the East Indies whence it was brought in foreign ships to Ostend, Copenhagen, and even to America, and from there transhipped to England.<sup>5</sup> German cloth, which was distinguished by its superb colouring, was beginning to be exported through Trieste in large quantities,<sup>6</sup> and manufactured cotton goods were also being sent to Turkey from Germany and Venice.<sup>7</sup> The Italians had developed an immense trade in silk goods,<sup>8</sup> and even the Russians pushed their way into the Turkish market after the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji. Their chief article of export was furs, and with these they drove out of the field the Canadian furs which the Levant Company had begun to import into Turkey.

1782 eight were entered inwards in London. In 1783 one sailed from London and one from the outports. In 1784 five entered London, one sailed from there and ten from the outports (Addit. MSS. 38348, ff. 99-111).

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the house of commons*, xxxvii, Apr. 6, Apr. 10, May 12, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Ainslie, July 13, 1784.

<sup>3</sup> Figures from Macpherson.

<sup>4</sup> Addit. MSS. 38348, f. 111; 38349, f. 345.

<sup>5</sup> Addit. MSS. 38350. Memo. of Company to Pitt, Feb. 2, 1790.

<sup>6</sup> Beaujour, p. 267; Eton, p. 457.

<sup>7</sup> Eton, p. 460.

Beaujour, p. 296.

The Company thereupon tried to capture the trade out of the hands of the Greek merchants who controlled it by shipping Russian furs round from Archangel, but the expense proved too great and the plan had to be dropped.<sup>1</sup> After 1774 the Russians also began to supply Turkey with iron, and for a time captured the traffic which the English had hitherto done in it.<sup>2</sup>

Nor did the act of 1753 remove all the obstacles which, according to the Company's critics, had hampered the trade in the past. Admittance became easier, but the trade was not really freed, for all the restrictions of the Company's by-laws still remained in force. These, and in particular the enactment that all goods brought from Turkey must be the produce of English commodities exported to the Levant, continued to fetter the activities of members and help rival traders. In addition, the consulage collected by the Company, which at one time (1761) reached 10 per cent., and was still 7 per cent. in 1775, imposed a very heavy burden upon the trade.<sup>3</sup> It was partly to avoid these restrictions and imposts that the considerable traffic with Turkey through foreign and circuitous routes developed, drugs and silks being imported from Italy and cotton from Holland.<sup>4</sup> Opponents of the Company, like Eton, added that the old selfish exclusive attitude was still alive among the merchants; that those who knew the secrets of the trade could always make money, and had therefore no incentive to develop it farther; that, in short, they were playing the part of the dog in the manger, controlling a rich commerce with selfish inefficiency, and obstructing the enterprise of those who, if the trade was free, would soon recapture the ground lost to the French. Even the lords of the committee for trade supported—though with tantalizing vagueness—the thesis that the shrinkage in the Company's business was not wholly due to successful foreign competition. In a lengthy memorandum (October 19, 1790) on the Turkey trade they expressed the opinion that it could never flourish to its full extent 'unless those obstructions are first removed which have their foundation in mistaken regulations made by ourselves'. It was significant that Levant products could be and were imported in large quantities to England from other countries: cotton wool for example could be shipped from Holland and silk and other goods from Leghorn cheaper

<sup>1</sup> Beaujour, pp. 318-27; Larpent, i, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Addit. MSS. 38223, ff. 139-40. <sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 52; Eton, p. 464.

<sup>4</sup> Addit. MSS. 38375, ff. 81-90; Eton, pp. 454-5.



than if brought in by British vessels direct from Turkey. This, the committee thought, did not arise from the nature of the trade itself, but from the manner of carrying it on; it was due to 'improvident acts made by the legislature, to injudicious by-laws made by the Turkey Company and to the delays occasioned by the present system of performing quarantine'. These obstacles had increased the charges of the trade and made its returns uncertain.<sup>1</sup> Unhappily the 'improvident acts' and 'injudicious by-laws' were not particularized or defined, and the committee contented itself with a pledge to go into the whole question of the diminution of the trade—an intention which, perhaps because of the French war in 1793, seems never to have been pursued. None the less the memorandum does add weight to the attacks made on the existing organization.

The crowning proof of the desperate plight to which the Levant trade had been reduced came in 1767 when the Company was compelled to apply to the government for aid. It was unable to find the £10,000 per annum required for the upkeep of the ambassador and consuls in the Levant, and in order to keep it afloat the house of commons authorized the king to grant it £5,000 in 1768. It received a similar sum in each of the two following years. In 1771 it told the house of commons that this money had been used to pay off debts incurred in Turkey and that it had hoped not to need further aid, but the Russo-Turkish war (1768-74) had produced 'a great stagnation' of trade, and made it necessary to apply for another grant. For that year, and for the next two, the merchants were voted £5,000; and after a year's interval (1774) they received a similar sum in 1775. Then, as trade revived, they were able to dispense with help for three years. But the effects of the American war upon their trade compelled them to have recourse to the government again in 1779, and from then onwards until the end of the war they were given £5,000 per annum, except in 1781 when the vote had to be raised to £8,000. In 1784 the grant was reduced to £4,000, the next year it fell to £3,000, and from then until 1794, when the French war had begun and trade was again suffering, it ceased, and the Company was able to pay its own way.<sup>2</sup>

The long decline of the merchants' fortunes throughout the eighteenth century was reflected in the shrinkage of most of their

<sup>1</sup> The Memo. is in F.O. 78. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Figures from the *Journals of the house of commons*.

settlements in Turkey. At Constantinople, where there had formerly been about twenty-five factors, the numbers of those who attended the factory meetings had dropped to under ten by 1760,<sup>1</sup> and by 1794 only five factors remained.<sup>2</sup> Smyrna was the busiest port in the Levant, and as the century progressed it seems to have absorbed the largest share of the Company's trade,<sup>3</sup> but none the less the old traffic in cloth, silk, and mohair dwindled steadily before French competition, troubles in Persia, and changing fashions. Mohair was the chief article exported from there to England in the first half of the century, but it was later superseded by raw silk. The factory dropped in numbers from thirty-six in 1704 to six in 1794.<sup>4</sup> Aleppo, once the most thriving of all the factories, suffered even more severely. From over forty its members had dropped by 1725 to under thirty.<sup>5</sup> A few years later they were down to fifteen;<sup>6</sup> and when Pococke and Hasselquist visited the city in the next decade only seven or eight houses survived.<sup>7</sup> By Volney's time (1783-5) those had again been reduced to two.<sup>8</sup> The correspondence of the factors there reflects the ill state of their affairs. In 1760 trade for the last two years had been 'at its lowest ebb'; in 1769 times are declared to be 'very cruel' and the cloth trade 'almost ruined'; twelve years later (1781) business was 'in a most deplorable situation'. Silk was still the chief article purchased there, but as the century progressed cotton wool and yarn began to play a more prominent part in the cargoes sent from Scanderoon. In 1783 the Company decided that as the trade of the factory was then so inconsiderable no new consul should be appointed to succeed Consul Abbot who had just died, and the offices of chaplain and treasurer were suppressed.<sup>9</sup> It appointed

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 184, e.g. ff. 4, 17, 32. According to Masson (*18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 611, 615) the number of English houses in the Constantinople factory fell from 5 to 2 in the century. The Dutch had 2 houses, and the French 11.

<sup>2</sup> Addit. MSS. 38229, f. 163.

<sup>3</sup> In 1776 15 ships were entered in the Company's books from Smyrna, 5 from Scanderoon, and 2 from Salonika. In 1785 the corresponding numbers were 19, 1, and 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 38. Bodleian Pamphlets, Folio 665, f. 192; Addit. MSS. 38229, f. 163.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 127. A letter from the factory to Stanyan, Apr. 16, 1725, was signed by twenty-seven names only.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 117. Company to Consul Coxé, Oct. 12, 1734.

<sup>7</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. i, p. 151; Hasselquist, p. 398.

<sup>8</sup> Volney, ii, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to de Vezin, Sept. 26, 1783; S.P. 110. 59, Jan. 28, 1784.

a pro-consul, but in 1790 it was resolved to close down the factory altogether from April 1791 and its books were sent to Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> The factor marine at Scanderoon, the port of Aleppo, had already been suppressed in 1783.<sup>2</sup> None the less some of the merchants stayed on in Aleppo doing some trade in cotton wool, pistachio nuts, and in Indian muslin and cotton goods brought from Bassora by the caravans.<sup>3</sup>

On the remainder of the Syrian coast conditions were equally stagnant. There was an English vice-consul at Acre throughout this period, but most of the trade there was in the hands of the French.<sup>4</sup> Vice-consulates also existed at Latachia and Tripoli, where a little traffic was done in silk, but the former was suppressed in 1778 and the latter in 1785 because there was no longer any trade there.<sup>5</sup> At Jaffa a Levantine Italian was acting as consul for the English in 1772.<sup>6</sup> On the island of Cyprus the consulate at Larnaca survived, and a Greek served as vice-consul at Limesol. Cotton, leather, and raw silk were still exported, but the main significance of Cyprus was that its position, and the cheapness of provisions on the island, made it a port of call for ships in that area.<sup>7</sup> Pococke, who was on the island of Crete in 1739, found a consul there, but noted that the English did very little trade, the consul's being the only English house;<sup>8</sup> and when Porter appointed a new consul at Canea in 1750 the Company told him 'we cannot find in our books that we ever concerned ourselves about any consul at Canea'.<sup>9</sup> The explanation of this was that after 1709 the post had been filled by the ambassadors, who nominated to some of the smaller consulates, and the Company had thus lost track of it.<sup>10</sup>

An agent was maintained at Angora,<sup>11</sup> and the vice-consulate on the island of Chios, appointments to which were in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Ainslie, Mar. 16, 1790; Jan. 11, 1791.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 110. 59, Jan. 28, 1784; S.P. 105. 121. Company to William Scholl, Feb. 27, 1784.

<sup>3</sup> See the letters from Aleppo Factors in S.P. 110. 50 (1793-4), 51 (1791-3).

<sup>4</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. i, p. 52; Volney, ii, p. 228.

<sup>5</sup> Volney, ii, p. 174; Pococke, ii, pt. i, p. 101 (when Pococke was in Tripoli the consul's was the only English house there); Drummond, p. 127; S.P. 110. 59, Sept. 3, 1778; S.P. 105. 119, p. 82; S.P. 105. 121. Company to Ainslie, Apr. 29, 1785.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 185, f. 89.

<sup>7</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. i, pp. 211-13, 232-3; Drummond, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. i, pp. 241-3.

<sup>9</sup> S.P. 105. 118; p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> There is record of the appointment of Mr. Mark Anthony Bertrand to the office in place of Mr. James Raimandi by the ambassador in 1799 (S.P. 105. 190, p. 158).

<sup>11</sup> S.P. 105. 184, f. 50; Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 86.

the consul at Smyrna, continued throughout the century, and was normally held either by a Greek or a Levantine Italian.<sup>1</sup> Similar vice-consulates existed, or were created, mainly for the purpose of assisting navigation, on the islands of Mykonos, Milos, Tinos, Enos, Mitylene, and Nathaglio. A consul still resided on Zante, but the trade with the island was negligible.<sup>2</sup> The Venetians had continued to overburden the currant trade with charges and the result was that most of the business had passed to the Morea. Thus it was no uncommon thing for the Zante currant crop to be left intact while the Morea growers had sold out, and been paid for their next crop as well. The Anglo-French war of 1793 and the consequent danger to English shipping in the Mediterranean completed the ruin of Zante, and in the next few years Saint-Sauveur actually saw large parts of the currant crop of the island thrown away or given to the beasts.<sup>3</sup>

Greece was indeed the one area where the Company's trade showed any signs of expansion in the eighteenth century. At Athens a Greek served as English agent;<sup>4</sup> another consulate was established at Arta in 1769;<sup>5</sup> and at Patras, the chief market for the currant trade, there still resided a consul, now dignified with the title of 'consul-general for the Morea'.<sup>6</sup> But the chief development took place in the newly established settlement of Salonika. This never seems to have been large in numbers,<sup>7</sup> and the French retained the lion's share of the business there, but none the less the Levant Company wrote in 1788 of the 'prosperous situation' of its trade in that scale,<sup>8</sup> and the consul ranked with those of Smyrna and Aleppo as one of the agents with whom the merchants regularly corresponded. Cloth, linens, and muslins, tin, lead, raw and wrought iron, clocks and watches were sold there in exchange for cotton, tobacco, and carpets. The trade in clocks

<sup>1</sup> Pococke found an Italian and Chandler a Greek in the office.

<sup>2</sup> Chandler found two or three factors there in 1764, but in 1771 the consul's was the only house surviving (Chandler, ii, p. 339; S.P. 97. 56. Consul Paul to Earl of Dartmouth, June 1771).

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Sauveur, *Voyage historique*, &c., iii, pp. 260-3.

<sup>4</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 119, p. 298.

<sup>6</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 177; Beaujour, p. 160. At the end of the century 8 million lb. of currants were exported annually via Patras, of which the English took five-eighths (Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 621).

<sup>7</sup> In the middle of the century the English had five factors and the consul there (Masson, *18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 616). Beaujour (writing in 1797) said there were then only two English houses. F. Daniell, writing in 1794, also stated that there were then only two factors (Addit. MSS. 38229, f. 163).

<sup>8</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Consul Moore, Oct. 31, 1788.

and watches both at Salonika and elsewhere was such a flourishing one that an English clockmaker could express the jesting belief that the streets in Turkey were paved with English watches.<sup>1</sup>

The Company's relations with Egypt during the century present an interesting story, though in its later developments it lies rather outside the scope of this work. For fifty years after Fleetwood's appointment it is possible to trace in the Company's books an unbroken line of English consuls at Cairo,<sup>2</sup> and there is evidence that a certain amount of trade was being done. At first coffee seems to have been the main article purchased at Alexandria, but from about 1735 onwards this was displaced by cotton wool, senna, gum arabic, and sal-ammoniac.<sup>3</sup> By 1749 there were nine English merchants at Cairo.<sup>4</sup> But in Egypt as elsewhere French cloth largely captured the market, though the *grandees* continued to buy English woollen goods for their better quality and finish.<sup>5</sup> The demand from this source was, however, a limited one, and in the three years after 1750 scarcely twenty-five bales of cloths were sent to Egypt.<sup>6</sup> Added to this, the miserable condition of the country, torn by the struggle of the Mameluke Beys both against their Turkish suzerain and between themselves for supremacy; the uncurbed tyranny of the government; the high cost of the presents needed to preserve the goodwill of each successive petty despot who rose to power; and the exactions which continued to fall with unfailing regularity upon the merchants all impeded the growth of trade. The action of Ibrahim, the governor of Cairo, who in 1749 turned the English consul out of his house and extorted several sums of money from him by violence, was a typical illustration of the background against which the merchants had to struggle, and as redress was impossible commerce languished. In 1754 therefore the Levant Company resolved to abolish the consulate at Cairo 'by reason of the uncertainty of success and the

<sup>1</sup> Beaujour, pp. 49, 219, 232, 236, 240-1, 264. In 1697 no watches were exported; in 1786 2,350 were sent out. There was some competition from France, but the English clock work was superior (Addit. MSS. 38348, f. 103; 38223, ff. 139-40).

<sup>2</sup> Their names were: Fleetwood 1698-1704; Walter Marchant 1704-6; William Walters 1706-7; William Farrington 1707-19; Stephen Moore 1719-21; Philip Wheake 1721-31; Robert Barton 1731-50; Richard Harris 1751-7.

<sup>3</sup> The Company's register books (S.P. 105. 168, 169) show that duties were paid annually on at least one ship trading to Alexandria. They were levied on two ships in 1733 and on three in 1735. One vessel—the *Peterborough*—took out 1,637 cloths to Alexandria in 1708.

<sup>4</sup> See their petition to the Duke of Bedford, June 8, 1749 (S.P. 97. 34).

<sup>5</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 118. Company to Porter, Sept. 17, 1754.

certainty of a great and growing annual charge attending it',<sup>1</sup> and the books were ordered to be transferred to Cyprus. Richard Harris, the consul in Egypt, accordingly placed English affairs under the protection of his Dutch colleague and withdrew early in 1757.<sup>2</sup> But some of the merchants remained<sup>3</sup> and trade had so far revived that in 1767 Murray, the ambassador, issued a patent to a Mr. Marion to act as vice-consul at Cairo.<sup>4</sup> Six years later (1773) he also appointed a Greek, Constantine Macri, to serve as English agent at Alexandria.<sup>5</sup> The Company seems to have acquiesced in these appointments—but it disclaimed all responsibility and steadily refused to revive its former consulate at Cairo.<sup>6</sup>

The time was, however, rapidly approaching when England's interests in Egypt were to assume a much more vital importance than that ever envisaged by the Levant Company; for as the century progressed factors became visible which soon made the destiny of the land of the Pharaohs a matter of international significance. As the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India developed and it was seen that that vast peninsula was fated to pass under European control, keen brains in France, the forerunners of Napoleon, had quickly seized upon the strategic importance of Egypt as the great stepping stone to the east. At the same time the growing weakness of the Turkish Empire, and in particular its defeat at the hands of Russia in the war of 1768-74, and the visible desire of the Tsarina Catherine and the Emperor Joseph to exploit the feebleness of their neighbour in the years which followed, gave an incentive to the idea which had been in the air since the time of Louis XIV, that if the Ottoman Empire collapsed France might have to seize Egypt in order to safeguard her vast interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Choiseul had entertained the project, and in the next forty years the belief spread that if France could no longer protect her old protégé Turkey against her northern foes and against disintegration from within, she must make sure of Egypt as her share of the plunder when the dissolution of the sultan's empire was seen to be imminent.

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 118. Company to Porter, Sept. 17, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Company to Porter, May 12, 1757; Company to Harris, May 6, 1755.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 119. Company to Robert Hughes (who was acting as consul for the Dutch in Cairo in 1760), Aug. 26, 1760.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Company to Murray, July 31, 1767.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 185, f. 114.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 120. Company to Murray, Aug. 17, 1773.

Commercial motives provided yet another influence to attract new interest in Egypt. Ever since the Turkish conquest early in the sixteenth century the Red Sea had been closed to all Christian shipping. It was a Moslem lake whose shores led a never-failing stream of true believers to the cradle of their faith; and repeated efforts by the French had failed to win access to these holy waters. This was one of the reasons why for over two centuries the old trade route to the orient via Egypt and the Red Sea had been of necessity disused by the merchants of Europe, and the Cape of Good Hope took the place of Cairo and Alexandria as the main channel of communication with India and the far east. But the course of events in India and in Egypt in the eighteenth century led to a revival of interest in the Red Sea route which was much shorter and quicker than that round Africa.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand the great expansion of European influence in the Indian peninsula and the fierce rivalries of the English and French made both eager for the better communications and more profitable trade which the opening of the Red Sea would offer; and on the other hand the virtual independence of the sultan which the Mameluke rulers of Egypt had acquired by the middle of the century pointed the way to break through the old prohibition.

It was this semi-commercial, semi-political motive which first produced new developments in Egypt. In theory no Christian vessel approaching the Turkish dominions from the Indian Ocean could sail beyond Mocha,<sup>2</sup> but since the end of the seventeenth century the ships of the English East India Company had, by the connivance of the sheriff of Mecca who found the infraction of the sultan's mandate a profitable one, been allowed to go as far as Jedda. Beyond that port the Red Sea had hitherto remained strictly closed to the infidel. But in the seventeen-sixties Ali Bey, one of the Mamelukes who had for the moment established his supremacy in Egypt and become practically independent of the Porte, was fired with the idea of bringing the trade between India and Europe back to its old route through the Red Sea. The project, if successful, would mean a vast increase of revenue to the ruler of Egypt through the customs duties; and when Ali Bey seized Jedda and Mecca in 1770 his schemes seemed well on the way to

<sup>1</sup> The shortest passage from London to Calcutta via the Cape was 150 days. Via Suez it took only 63 days (Hoskins, p. 312; Rooke, p. 179).

<sup>2</sup> Sir Thomas Roe while on his famous mission to India had started English trade with Mocha in 1618.

fulfilment. At Jedda it is probable that he got into touch with the English who frequented there and that some English vessels actually penetrated the forbidden waters to Suez. Two years later Ali had lost both his conquests and his power in Egypt; but the successor to his supremacy, Mohammed Abou Dahab, in 1773 granted to the English explorer, James Bruce, permission for his countrymen to go to Suez and trade. Bruce notified the authorities in India of this concession and in 1774 Warren Hastings, who was then governor of Bengal, persuaded some of the merchants at Calcutta to send a ship to Suez with goods for the Turkish market, realizing the possibility of opening up a new profitable trade and also of a more expeditious route for dispatches. On the arrival of this vessel the sheriff of Mecca, who was afraid of the customs revenues of Jedda suffering if that port was deserted in favour of Suez, complained to the sultan, and his protests were backed by the English merchants in Constantinople fearful lest the trade they did in eastern goods through Aleppo should be damaged by the opening of a cheaper channel of supply. The Porte thereupon issued a firman ordering the pasha of Cairo to stop all English ships from visiting Suez<sup>1</sup> (1774). In spite of this two more vessels did arrive there in the following year, and John Shaw, who had been sent by Hastings, negotiated a commercial treaty with Mohammed Abou Dahab in March 1775 giving the English full liberty to frequent Suez and to trade in Egypt on paying the duties stipulated in this agreement. For the next four years ships arrived annually at Suez from India and officials of the East India Company began to travel by them to Europe.<sup>2</sup>

From the first another observer had grasped the importance of this new link which was slowly being forged with the orient. George Baldwin had lived in Cyprus and at Acre during the years 1760-8 as a factor of the Levant Company, and, if his own testimony can be believed, he had even then resolved to reopen the Red Sea route to India and, to further this end, had made preparations to proceed as a free mariner from Egypt to the east. The death of his brother, William Baldwin, who was consul in Cyprus, in 1771 and his own appointment to succeed him<sup>3</sup> delayed the project for a time; but he revealed his plan to Mohammed Bey at Cairo, who encouraged him to persevere, and, according to his own statement,

<sup>1</sup> The Firman is in Martens, ii, p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Charles-Roux, *Autour d'une route*, pp. 1-52.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 119. Company to pro-consul Smith, Aleppo, Aug. 16, 1771.



Murray, the ambassador at Constantinople, also approved. In March 1773 he resigned his consulship in order to be free to carry out his great design.<sup>1</sup> By March 1774 he was in Egypt, endeavouring to embark at Suez for India, but various obstacles hindered him, and at length his patience failed, and he returned to England. No sooner had he gone than Shaw arrived at Suez with the two ships from Bengal; and Baldwin, offering his services to the East India Company to promote the development of the new passage to the east, hastened back to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> There, during the next few years, he busied himself in organizing direct communications with England to fit in with the arrival of vessels from India at Suez, and in pressing upon the ambassador at Constantinople the need for supporting this reopening of a great commercial highway.

He was undoubtedly an ambitious and a far-seeing man and his mind appears to have leapt almost at once beyond mere commercial factors to the possibility that the future political control of Egypt might be destined for his own country; but at first his schemes met with a chilling reception. The more the Red Sea route was developed the more the Turkish government was disturbed by its potentialities. A serious loss of revenue was inevitable if the trade passed from Jedda to Suez; and with the example fresh before them of English penetration and conquest in India the sultan's ministers feared lest trade to Egypt might equally cloak some design of empire. At the end of 1775 they therefore forwarded to London through Anthony Hayes, who was acting as chargé d'affaires at Constantinople after the death of Murray, a formal request that all British ships should be prohibited from touching at Suez together with a clear intimation that the trade there could not be permitted.<sup>3</sup> So matters rested for the next twelve months during which another ship reached Suez, and Sir Robert Ainslie arrived at the Porte to fill the vacant embassy.

At the beginning of January 1777 the sloop *Swallow*, sent by Hastings from Madras, appeared at Suez with passengers and dispatches for England, and three of the former had their baggage searched and detained for a time by Ibrahim Bey of Cairo. Baldwin at once lodged a complaint against this treatment with Ainslie and begged for his help in securing the opening of the Red Sea. 'I

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin, p. 4; S.P. 105. 120. Company to Baldwin, Dec. 15, 1772.

<sup>2</sup> Baldwin, pp. 5-6. He was commissioned by the East India Company to act as agent and was granted a small salary (Hoskins, p. 305).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 52. Hayes to Weymouth, Jan. 3, 1776.

know', he wrote, 'that under some disguise or another it will peremptorily be carried on and that the Turks cannot prevent it.'<sup>1</sup> Ainslie's representations, while they secured a promise that those responsible for the treatment of the three passengers should be punished if possible, naturally produced a new protest from the Turks against the continued presence of English ships at Suez; and he referred the whole question to the secretary of state, Lord Weymouth, though he did not conceal his own hostility to the project of forcing open the Red Sea which at first he believed to be the work of the East India merchants, anxious to thrust themselves into the monopoly of the Levant Company. Weymouth in reply confessed that he had not sufficient information on the subject in general to lay down a line of conduct for Ainslie, but if there was a clash of interests between the two trading companies they had only to state their respective claims and they would be carefully studied.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, however, there was no such clash at this time as Ainslie and Weymouth believed. The Levant Company was uncompromisingly hostile to the whole design of developing the Suez route and it had once more flatly refused to appoint Baldwin as its consul in Egypt in 1777.<sup>3</sup> In the new project it saw both an infraction of its old monopoly within the sultan's dominions by the rival Company, and a serious menace to its trade, for it exported from England to Turkey a considerable quantity of oriental goods brought home by the East India Company, and it was clear that if these began to go direct to the Levant via the Red Sea that branch of its commerce would be cut off. It feared also that a continued disregard of the sultan's commands against the Suez traffic might lead to reprisals which would fall upon its members and their property. To the East India merchants the design was no more palatable when it was studied, for the attempts to trade through the Red Sea had partly been the work of private merchants who were not members of the Company, and a motley crowd of adventurers, English, Greek, and Armenian, were waiting eagerly to push their way into the new opening. Such a development promised to injure the East India Company's trade both in India and at home.

When, therefore, Ainslie reported that five more ships had

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 53. Baldwin to Ainslie, Jan. 22, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The correspondence is in S.P. 97. 53.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 120. Company to Baldwin, Sept. 2, 1777.

arrived at Suez in the spring of 1777 and that the Turks had again protested forcibly, the East India merchants readily consented to send out positive orders to the different presidencies in India prohibiting all their servants from trading beyond Jedda. They requested, however, that Ainslie should obtain permission from the Porte for Indian dispatches to go through Suez on condition that the packet boats carrying them unloaded no merchandise.<sup>1</sup> This the sultan's ministers refused, once more forbidding all Christian ships to proceed beyond Jedda and allowing dispatches to be conveyed from there to Suez only on Turkish vessels. But they were unable to enforce their decision for Ibrahim Bey, who was now supreme in Egypt, ignored it, and both dispatches and merchandise continued to arrive at Suez.

Baldwin never ceased to press upon Ainslie the need for getting the door to the east fully open, and events in 1778 furnished him with a strong argument. On the outbreak of war with France in that year he had at once dispatched the news to India by a sloop which happened to be at Suez, and the speed with which the information was conveyed greatly facilitated the siege and capture of Pondicherry (Oct. 18).<sup>2</sup> It was a practical illustration of the value of the new line of communication, and Baldwin used it to push his claim to be recognized as British consul in Egypt; but he failed to secure any support from Ainslie whose hands were tied by the previous decision of the Levant Company, confirmed in emphatic tones in 1779, and a personal visit to Constantinople (Dec.-Jan. 1778-9) met with little success. The ambassador was convinced that the opening of the Red Sea would prove prejudicial, not only to the Levant Company but to national interests, for he feared that the French might take advantage of it to strengthen their commercial and political position in India, and all that he would do was to ask once more for the privilege of sending dispatches via Suez, refusal of which was a foregone conclusion. The Porte replied with a new firman prohibiting all navigation beyond Jedda under the most severe penalties, and Ainslie sent Baldwin back to Egypt with order to enforce this decree on all English subjects.

But the Turks had now realized that these paper prohibitions were certain to be ignored, an opinion which the arrival of more

<sup>1</sup> Hoskins, pp. 307-8; S.P. 97. 53. Weymouth to Ainslie, July 11, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 54. Ainslie to Baldwin, Apr. 29, 1778; Baldwin to Ainslie, June 20, 1778; Charles Roux, *Autour*, &c., pp. 99-100.

ships at Suez early in 1779 fully confirmed, and they resolved on sterner—and typically oriental—measures. In April two vessels reached Suez with a rich cargo. Some of the goods were conveyed to Cairo in safety, but the main caravan, in charge of seven Europeans, was pillaged in the desert beyond Suez by the Bedouins acting under the instigation of the Turkish pasha of Cairo, and only two of its white leaders survived. At the same time all those connected with the ships, both at Suez and Cairo, were arrested, and Baldwin was also made a prisoner. He escaped to Smyrna on a French ship, and Ainslie eventually secured the release of the other captives; but the outrage had the desired effect, and with the exception of two more ships which appeared at Kosseir in the summer of 1780 no further attempts were made by the adventurers to push farther north than Jedda for some years. Baldwin, after another visit to Constantinople and a heated squabble with Ainslie, retired to England in 1781.

For the moment his design seemed at an end; but the withdrawal of the English acted as an incentive to the French to try to open the Red Sea and reap the profits which waited upon success, and during the next few years they made a determined effort. At Constantinople their ambassador failed to shake the resolution of the sultan, but in Egypt one of their agents, Truguet, made a series of treaties and agreements with the beys, the Arab sheiks, and the grand customer in 1785 sanctioning the trade to Suez, fixing the duties to be paid, and guaranteeing security to all persons and goods passing through Egypt.<sup>1</sup> That year a French ship anchored at Suez and officers carrying dispatches crossed over to Alexandria *en route* for France without molestation. Ainslie watched with anxiety, and even came to regret that there was no consul in Egypt to send him information. He knew that Hyder Ali of Mysore had written to the sultan in 1777 asking for help against England, that Tippoo sultan had sent an embassy to Constantinople in 1784 and that the French were intriguing with him; and in view of these facts any success of France in Egypt and the Red Sea appeared to open up a sinister prospect for English interests in India.<sup>2</sup> He exerted all his influence at the Porte to stop this, and his dispatches aroused the authorities at home to the danger.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Roux, *Autour*, &c., pp. 172–7; Hoskins, p. 311; Baldwin, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 53. Ainslie to Weymouth, Apr. 17, 1777; Charles Roux, *Autour*, &c., p. 178.

In 1785 Dundas, the president of the India board, sent for Baldwin and asked him to submit a report upon the situation in Egypt. As a result of his memorial the government decided to station a consul-general in Egypt and he was appointed to the office which he had so long desired. The main purpose of his mission was to open communications with India across Egypt by means of a treaty with the beys and to report fully on all French activities. To accomplish this he was granted an annual allowance and the East India Company undertook to finance Ainslie in his efforts to secure the sultan's approval of the projected treaty with the beys.<sup>1</sup> The Levant merchants protested against the appointment which—as they pointed out—infringed their exclusive right of nominating all consuls and agents within the Turkish dominions, on the ground that there was no settled authority or law in Egypt, that redress of complaints could not be expected from the Porte, and that they would be held responsible for the conduct and safety of the consul.<sup>2</sup> They failed, however, to stop the appointment, and in December 1786 Baldwin took up his office in Alexandria. In the following February he moved to Cairo, leaving Thomas Turner to act as vice-consul in Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> There he remained for the next few years making efforts to develop the Suez route which all failed before the hostility of the Turks and the unstable condition of the Egyptian government; but he was now independent of the Levant Company, his mission was mainly political in character, and its story lies beyond the limits of this study.

English trade to Egypt seems to have gained little by his efforts. He stated in 1778 that in two years he had freighted fifteen ships and imported £20,000 worth of goods from London;<sup>4</sup> but he had a case to support, and the report of the Levant Company made in 1790 hardly bore out his picture of the rich possibilities of commercial expansion in Egypt. It was then stated that owing to the disturbed condition of the country and to the insecurity of life and property there was little direct trade between England and Egypt, but that a few English did an indirect trade there through Leghorn, and that some cloth, copper, and tin were sent

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin, pp. 25-6; Charles Roux, *Autour, &c.*, pp. 205-18.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Lord North, Oct. 14, 1785.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Roux, *Autour, &c.*, p. 238. Ainslie was empowered to spend £2,000 and give another £600 in presents in order to get the Porte to withdraw its firman against the Red Sea trade (F.O. 78. 7. Carmarthen to Ainslie, Sept. 1, 1786).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 54. Baldwin to Ainslie, Feb. 21 and June 20, 1778.

from Smyrna to Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> According to Browne the consumption of English broad cloth in Egypt before 1792 was only about 800 bales per annum;<sup>2</sup> while Volney found no English factors living either at Cairo or Alexandria in the year 1783-5.<sup>3</sup> In the period 1775-85 only one ship was entered in the Company's register book<sup>4</sup> from Alexandria, one from Alexandria and Cyprus, and three from Scanderoon and Alexandria. During the next decade a few more appear, notably in 1792 when twelve ships paid duties on cargoes derived from Alexandria.<sup>5</sup>

In February 1793 the government determined to suppress the Egyptian consulate on the ground that it was an unprofitable expense, and after some delay Baldwin received his dismissal in October 1795, but he did not leave until March 1798 only a few weeks before the advent of Napoleon and the French conquest of the country.<sup>6</sup>

The holders of the embassy during this period call for little comment. They were men of average ability, most of whom filled the office efficiently if not with distinction; none of them showed outstanding talent or rose to greater fame in later life. Wortley Montagu's embassy only lasted a few months,<sup>7</sup> but it sufficed to enable his more famous wife to study and bring back to England the practice of inoculation against small-pox and to write some characteristically interesting letters.<sup>8</sup> Abraham Stanyan, his successor, had as a young man been in Turkey with Trumbull, who thought highly of him, and had subsequently been employed on missions to Switzerland, Italy, and Austria before he was sent to Constantinople.<sup>9</sup> The Earl of Kinnoull, who followed him, described Stanyan as 'a well-behaved com-

<sup>1</sup> See the Memorandum of the Lords of the Committee for Trade dated Oct. 19, 1790; in F.O. 78. 11. It is also in Addit. MSS. 38394, pp. 80-97.

<sup>2</sup> Browne, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 170.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 171.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Roux, *Autour, &c.*, pp. 314-15, 337; Baldwin, pp. 31-2; Dodwell, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> He was recalled because the Emperor Charles VI complained that he had shown too great a bias in favour of the Turks during the negotiations—conducted under the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors—which preceded the Peace of Passarowitz.

<sup>8</sup> Motraye noticed the practice of inoculation among the Circassians and gives an interesting account of it (ii, pp. 74-5).

<sup>9</sup> His life is in the *D.N.B.* Chesterfield in his letters says: 'Mr. Stanyan, after a long residence there [Switzerland], has written the best account of the thirteen cantons.'

<sup>3</sup> Volney, i, pp. 227-8.

plaisant gentleman of an indolent temper . . . whose life here these twelve years past, as I am informed, has been upon a sofa with the women';<sup>1</sup> but against that the Levant Company expressed its satisfaction at his services by letting him remain in Turkey for a long period, and when he left the grand vizier wrote to King George II that he had 'discharged the duty of his embassy in a commendable manner'.<sup>2</sup>

Kinnoull's tenure of the office was not so successful. Although he could command an 'attractive courtesy' when he wished,<sup>3</sup> he seems to have been a combative quarrelsome individual 'very apt to forget himself';<sup>4</sup> and he squabbled with most of his colleagues at Constantinople. He was recalled by the government in 1735 because of complaints made to London by the Dutch ambassador and the Russian resident at the Porte of his 'manifest partiality' for the French in the negotiations aroused by the outbreak of the Polish Succession war. Sir Everard Fawkener,<sup>5</sup> who replaced him, was the last of the members of the Levant Company to hold the office. In his early days he had lived and traded at Aleppo and had then settled down to a life of cultured ease in his house at Wandsworth where he enjoyed the friendship of Bolingbroke, and of Voltaire who stayed with him during his visit to England. At Constantinople his secretary, Stanhope-Aspinwall, paid a glowing tribute to his 'good nature and affability' which 'would make this and even an exile into Siberia supportable',<sup>6</sup> and he seems to have fulfilled his duties to the entire satisfaction of the government and the Company. On his own request he was allowed to return to England in 1742, and he never went back to the embassy although it was not until 1746 that his formal revocation took place and a new ambassador was appointed. He had meanwhile become private secretary to the Duke of Cumberland and joint postmaster general in 1745.<sup>7</sup> He died at Bath in 1758.<sup>8</sup> Stanhope-Aspinwall, who acted as agent in the interval between Fawkener's withdrawal and James Porter's arrival, was a relative of Lord Harrington's. He was subsequently consul at

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 26. Kinnoull to Chas. de la Faye, Aug. 19, 1730.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Ibrahim Pasha to George II.

<sup>3</sup> Saussure, p. 165. Saussure hints that Kinnoull was rather too fond of the bottle.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 28. Fawkener to Newcastle, June 1, 1736.

<sup>5</sup> His life is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 97. 31. Stanhope-Aspinwall to Lord Harrington, July 5, 1741.

<sup>7</sup> *Walpole's Letters*, ii, p. 80; *Cal. of Treasury Books, 1742-5*, p. 841.

<sup>8</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1758, p. 556.

Algiers for a short time after 1754<sup>1</sup> and later private secretary to Earl Harcourt.<sup>2</sup>

Porter probably owed his appointment to the embassy to the fact that his brother had married the daughter of one of the leading Turkey merchants of the time. For many years before going to Constantinople he had resided at Vienna, but in what capacity is not clear.<sup>3</sup> He remained at the Porte for fifteen years—a sufficient proof that his conduct was regarded as entirely satisfactory by the home authorities—and it was on his own request that he was finally recalled. His French colleague Vergennes, who did not like him, attributed 'a boastful character' to him, but recognized his honesty and prudence,<sup>4</sup> and Porter appears to have handled the complicated diplomatic situation produced by the Seven Years' war with considerable ability. A brief mission to Brussels 1763–5 closed his official career and he spent the rest of his life in the literary and scientific interests which had always occupied his mind. In 1768 he was offered, but refused, the crowning honour of the presidency of the Royal Society. Henry Grenville, the next ambassador, was the fifth son of Lord Temple and had been governor of Barbados 1746–56. On his return from there he married in 1757 'Peggy' Banks, one of the celebrated beauties of the day. He was recalled from Constantinople after he had been out for only three years, 'the king having thought it for his service that your excellency should return to England to serve in an employment here.'<sup>5</sup> The promised office proved to be one of the commissionerships of customs;<sup>6</sup> and Grenville henceforth lapsed into obscurity, dying in 1784 in his house in the Crescent, Bath.<sup>7</sup>

His place at Constantinople was filled by John Murray who had since 1754 been resident at Venice, and went straight from there to Turkey.<sup>8</sup> He obtained leave to visit England in 1775 and died in the lazaretto at Venice on his way home. Like Porter,

<sup>1</sup> Playfair, pp. 191, 194, 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 94. Stanhope-Aspinwall died in this year.

<sup>3</sup> His life is in the *D.N.B.* Larpent speaks of 'confidential missions' in support of the House of Austria, but Stanhope-Aspinwall said that Porter had been employed at Vienna 'upon merely mercantile affairs' (S.P. 97. 32. Stanhope-Aspinwall to Newcastle, Jan. 26, 1747).

<sup>4</sup> Marsangy, *Vergennes*, i, p. 341.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 42. Halifax to Grenville, May 31, 1765. He left Constantinople Oct. 13, 1765 (S.P. 105. 184, f. 136).

<sup>6</sup> Namier, *Structure of Politics*, i, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784. Grenville was M.P. for Thirsk in 1761 and for Buckingham in 1768.

<sup>8</sup> He arrived at Constantinople June 2, 1766 (S.P. 105. 184, f. 163).



Sir Robert Ainslie, who was sent out to replace Murray,<sup>1</sup> seems to have begun life as a merchant. His letters leave the impression of a rather precise pompous long-winded mentality, and George Canning hinted that he was a bore.<sup>2</sup> Diez, his Prussian colleague at the Porte, painted him in darker colours as an habitual liar full of vainglory and with a brazen face and execrable temper.<sup>3</sup> But he achieved the removal of the misteria duty for the Company, and the fact that he was left in undisturbed possession of the embassy until he asked to be recalled proves that the government was satisfied with his handling of the extremely difficult situation created by the Oczakov incident. In 1804 he was created a baronet with remainder to his nephew, and he died at Bath, aged 82, in 1812.<sup>4</sup>

The letters of nearly all the eighteenth-century ambassadors were filled with complaints about the growing inadequacy of their remuneration owing to the depreciation in the value of Turkish specie and to the rapid rise in the cost of living. Kinnoull stated that the price of provisions was double what it had been in Sutton's time; Fawkeners was said to be spending twice his salary in order to keep his family with decency; Grenville complained that he was worse off than any little envoy or resident; and after three years at Constantinople Murray claimed to be £1,500 out of pocket.<sup>5</sup> In exceptional circumstances occasional relief was wrung out of the government. Thus Grenville was given an allowance of three pounds a day in 1762 and Murray in 1772 received a gratuity of £500 in view of the great increase in the cost of living due to the Russian blockade;<sup>6</sup> but it was not until 1795 that any permanent addition was made to the ambassador's pay. By then its total value had dropped to the equivalent of

<sup>1</sup> He had lived for some time in Bordeaux where his father had settled as a merchant. His life is given in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>2</sup> Bagot, *George Canning and his friends*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Zinkeisen, vi, p. 689. Ainslie in return complained of Diez's 'inordinate vanity, want of experience, imprudent zeal and extravagant ambition' (Ainslie to Ewart, Oct. 22, 1789. F.O. 78. 10).

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Register*, 1804, p. 462; *D.N.B.*

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 26. Kinnoull to Charles de la Faye, Jan. 13, 1733; S.P. 97. 31. Fawkeners to Newcastle, Mar. 29, 1742; S.P. 97. 41. Grenville to Egremont, Apr. 12, 1762, S.P. 97. 45. Murray to Weymouth, Jan. 3, 1769. Fawkeners estimated his allowance at about £1,856 per annum—less than it had been 100 years earlier, when 5,000 chequins equalled £2,400 (S.P. 97. 56. Memo. of Fawkeners to Newcastle, Feb. 6, 1745).

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 97. 41. Earl of Egremont to Grenville, June 25, 1762; S.P. 97. 48. Rochford to Murray, Feb. 14, 1772.

about £1,000 per annum, and the Company therefore authorized Robert Liston, Ainslie's successor, to draw upon it annually in future for an additional £1,000 payable in England.<sup>1</sup> That the emoluments did decline in value may be believed; but the unofficial perquisites of the position must more than have sufficed to cover the additional burden thrown upon the ambassador. Otherwise the holders of the embassy would never have remained so long in Turkey merely to pile up deficits and debts. That it was still a profitable office was proved by the competency which Porter brought home,<sup>2</sup> and by the fact that John Wilkes was at one time a competitor for the office in the hope of recruiting his broken fortunes.<sup>3</sup> The historian must equally regret that the annals of the century were never enlivened by the contact of this flamboyant champion of liberty with the despotism of the east, and that his greater contemporary Doctor Johnson was unable to fulfil his professed desire of visiting Constantinople and learning Arabic as Pococke had done.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Liston, May 22, 1795.

<sup>2</sup> Larpent, i, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, iii, p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell (Everyman edition), ii, p. 331.

# X

## THE END

THE outbreak of war with France in 1793 once more produced a slump in the Company's trade. From the opening of hostilities privateers made the passage through the Mediterranean a dangerous one for merchant ships; but the worst period began in 1796 when Spain, who had deserted the first coalition in the preceding year, threw in her lot with France, and declared war on England. That compelled the withdrawal of the English fleet from the Mediterranean, and for the next two years—during which Napoleon established French supremacy in Italy—no protection could be given to English merchantmen sailing the inland sea. In view of the great danger which vessels thus ran in trading to the Levant and of the consequent high rates of insurance charged on them and their cargoes the navigation laws were again so far suspended in 1797 (as they had been in 1780) as to permit the Turkey Company to import goods usually brought from the Levant from any port, and either in British ships or in vessels belonging to a friendly nation.<sup>1</sup> But the situation in the Mediterranean at the time made this relaxation of little avail; and in the dark years which followed the break up of the first coalition the Turkey trade was woefully reduced. In 1795 Sir Sidney Smith wrote of it as 'already at its last effort',<sup>2</sup> and Eton confirmed him: 'Of late years it had been languishing and at the last dwindled into a state of insignificance when the present war entirely put a stop to all communication with the ports of the Levant.'<sup>3</sup> The approximate figures for exports and imports (official values) to and from Turkey for the years 1793-8 dropped as follows:<sup>4</sup>

	<i>Exports to Turkey</i>	<i>Imports from Turkey</i>
	£	£
1793 . . .	45,270	184,681
1794 . . .	117,700	324,906
1795 . . .	149,938	84,299
1796 . . .	132,776	150,182
1797 . . .	23,532	104,838
1798 . . .	56,585	42,285

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes at Large*, xvii, pp. 566-8.

<sup>2</sup> *H.M.C. Fortescue*, iv, pp. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup> Eton, p. 448. Browne in his *Travels*, 1792-8, noted the 'greatly decreased' trade in cloth to Egypt as a result of the war.

<sup>4</sup> Figures from Marshall.

In 1794 the Company had again to apply to the government for help and from then onwards until 1802, with the single exception of 1795, it received an annual subsidy of £5,000 to support its expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Conditions improved after Napoleon's Egyptian expedition in 1798 which led to the re-entry of the English fleet into the Mediterranean under Nelson, and to a naval victory which established England's supremacy there for the remainder of the war. Trade was once more possible, and the struggle in Egypt increased the demand for English goods needed by the Turks to equip the armies sent against the French invaders.<sup>2</sup>

The motives which prompted Napoleon to go to Egypt and the course of the expedition both belong to political history and lie outside the scope of this work, but the adventure had several results which did closely concern the story of the Levant Company. The unwarranted attack upon a Turkish province was promptly followed by a treaty of alliance between Great Britain and the Porte (January 1799)<sup>3</sup> arranging for their co-operation in expelling the French from Egypt. This treaty—the first of its kind ever made between the two parties—linked them as close partners in a common struggle, and the dependence of the Turks upon their ally for naval defence, supplies and military aid enabled the Levant merchants to wring from the sultan the long-forbidden right of access to the Black Sea.<sup>4</sup> The first break in the strict monopoly which the Turks had hitherto preserved of that inland sea came with the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji in 1774. By that settlement the Porte had been obliged to permit Russian merchants to enjoy freedom of navigation in the Black Sea; and the tsarina's annexation of the Crimea a few years later and the Peace of Jassy in 1792, which carried the Russian frontier to the River Dniester, tore into shreds the old claim of the Turks to keep the sea a Moslem preserve. In February 1784 Catherine had issued a ukase promising favourable treatment to all foreign merchants trading or settling in any

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the house of commons*. Nothing was voted to the Company in 1797—but it received £10,000 in 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Exports and imports for 1799–1800 (official values) were:

		Exports	Imports
		£	£
1799	. . .	200,505	33,091
1800	. . .	157,450	199,773

<sup>3</sup> Printed in Martens, vi, pp. 568–73.

<sup>4</sup> The sultan spoke of the Black Sea as 'a virgin shut up in the harem' (Headlam-Morley, *Studies in Diplomatic History*, p. 216).

of the ports of her territory on the Black Sea,<sup>1</sup> and in August of that year the Levant Company wrote urging Ainslie, if the occasion offered, to get from the sultan permission for the British flag to enter the hitherto forbidden waters.<sup>2</sup> But no progress was made until 1799 when Spencer Smith, who then represented the Company at Constantinople, was authorized to spend considerable sums of money in *douceurs* to obtain the privilege, and secured a note promising the desired permission as 'un acte gratuit' given in proof of the friendly sentiments of the Porte to England.<sup>3</sup> The redemption of the promise was postponed either by the dilatoriness or deliberate obstruction of the Turks, and it was not until 1802 that the freedom of the Black Sea was at length achieved.<sup>4</sup> Corn, tallow, and timber for naval purposes were the chief articles in which the English traded there when the old ban was thus lifted.

The increasing political importance of the embassy at Constantinople had long been apparent. As England's diplomatic interests widened, and her intervention in European politics became more regular and forceful, the ambassador to the Porte, who had once been primarily a commercial agent, was steadily transformed into an important piece upon the diplomatic chessboard. In that dualism which had always marked the position the scale tilted until, from being agents of a trading corporation thinly disguised by a royal commission, the ambassadors developed into representatives of the crown engaged primarily on diplomatic business, and the affairs of their other master, the Company, dropped to second place in their regard. The Seven Years' war, the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-74, and the partition of Poland helped to promote this tendency, and the crisis with Russia over Oczakov in 1791, which showed that the government was awakening to the interest that England had in preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire,

<sup>1</sup> Martens, iii, pp. 734-6.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 121. Company to Ainslie, Aug. 31, 1784. Murray had already petitioned unsuccessfully for the opening of the Black Sea to English ships in Dec. 1774—immediately after the Peace of Kutchuk Kainardji (S.P. 97. 50. Murray to Rochford, Dec. 17, 1774).

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Spencer Smith, Oct. 29, 1799; Martens, vi, pp. 740-1.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Spencer Smith, Sept. 5, 1800; Company to Elgin, July 31, 1801; Company to Alexander Straton, Oct. 29, 1802. The date of the grant was July 29, 1802, and it was declared to be upon the same conditions as had formerly been given to Russia. The Reis Effendi's note to Alexander Straton, July 29, 1802, is in *Annual Register*, 1802, p. 619.

clearly pointed the way to a greatly enhanced importance for the embassy in the future. Then there came the French war, and the expedition to Egypt, which, more decisively than the Oczakov affair, lit up the vital concern of Great Britain in the destiny of Turkey. Her maintenance and defence seemed essential to the preservation of the empire that was rapidly expanding in India, and the ambassador at Constantinople gained a new significance as the sentinel upon the bridge which linked the island kingdom to her eastern dominions. Realization of this at length led the government to abolish the old dual control and to take over into its own hands the appointment and payment of the ambassador and his staff, severing him completely from the Company and its concerns.

Sir Robert Ainslie had received permission from the king to return to England in 1793, and Robert Liston, who had held diplomatic appointments at Madrid and Stockholm, was recommended to the Company as his successor, and duly elected.<sup>1</sup> He received permission to return home on private affairs in August 1795<sup>2</sup> and left Spencer Smith, the brother of Sir Sidney Smith, as chargé d'affaires. The following year it was decided that Liston should not return to Turkey, and he was sent on a mission to America instead.<sup>3</sup> Francis James Jackson, formerly secretary to the legation at Berlin and to the embassy at Madrid, was nominated to succeed him,<sup>4</sup> but he eventually resigned the appointment, and Spencer Smith was left in charge at Constantinople. In order to promote the negotiations for an alliance between England and the Porte, and for co-operation in the war which followed Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, he was raised to the rank of minister plenipotentiary in the summer of 1798;<sup>5</sup> but it was soon felt to be necessary to have a representative of greater weight at the sultan's court.

The Earl of Elgin wrote to Lord Grenville in November 1798:

'on considering how infinitely the present contest is likely to be influenced by the union of Turkey with Russia and Great Britain; how essentially the future greatness of France may be obstructed by our firmly establishing and maintaining an interest in Turkey; and how much our trade in the Levant and in the Mediterranean may hereafter

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 176, George III to the Levant Company, Sept. 22, 1793. Charles Whitworth, who had asked to be considered for the post in 1791 was offered—but rejected it in 1793 (*H.M.C. Fortescue*, ii, pp. 100, 387). Liston is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>2</sup> He left Constantinople Nov. 4.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Spencer Smith, Mar. 8, 1796.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Company to Duke of Leeds, July 29, 1796; *Annual Register*, 1795, p. 54. <sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Spencer Smith, Sept. 25, 1798.

be augmented by a proper improvement of the present dispositions of the Ottoman Empire; it has occurred to me as possible that it may be in your lordships intention to send to Constantinople an English representative equal in rank and situation to the Imperial and French ministers at that court. Should that supposition be founded I would venture to bring myself under your notice for that embassy.<sup>1</sup>

By the following spring it had been decided to adopt this proposal and to send Elgin as ambassador on a special mission to the Porte, giving Spencer Smith the title of secretary to the embassy and leaving the transaction of the Company's business in his hands as before.<sup>2</sup>

The result of this arrangement was a foregone conclusion. Smith, regarding himself as 'half disgraced' by Elgin's appointment, was reluctant to acknowledge the authority of the new ambassador, and the two men promptly squabbled. Elgin complained of the secretary's 'peculiar degree of haughtiness' and of his continuing to carry on separate and secret negotiations with the Porte, while Smith professed to find it impossible to win Elgin's confidence, and asked for leave of absence. The efforts of Grenville and the Company to smooth things out were of no avail, and in January 1801 the disgruntled secretary was given permission to return home.<sup>3</sup> At the same time Elgin, whose expenses—in view of the purely political character of his mission—had hitherto been paid by the government, was now, on the recommendation of the crown, elected as ambassador by the Company, his position being thus regularized and aligned to that of his predecessors.<sup>4</sup> He was recalled or resigned—perhaps because the Peace of Amiens no longer made it seem necessary for a man of his rank to remain at Constantinople—in January 1803. His secretary, Alexander Straton,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Fortescue*, iv, pp. 359–60.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Spencer Smith, Mar. 5, Oct. 29, 1799. Elgin had his first public audience with the sultan, Nov. 23, 1799 (S.P. 105. 190, p. 180).

<sup>3</sup> The Company wrote to Smith that it 'sincerely deplores the events which have deprived the Company of the exertions and talents of a man so well able to promote its interests as yourself' (S.P. 105. 122. Company to Smith, May 22, 1801). He was given a piece of plate on his return to England. The government subsequently sent him as Envoy Extraordinary to Würtemberg (*Annual Register*, 1803, p. 485).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 177. George III to the Company, Jan. 20, 1801; S.P. 105. 122. Company to Lord Grenville, Jan. 23, 1801; Company to Elgin, Jan. 30, 1801.

<sup>5</sup> He was appointed secretary to the embassy in June 1801 (*Annual Register*, 1801, p. 59). In 1807 he was sent as minister plenipotentiary to Stockholm (*ibid.*, 1807, p. 541).

acted as minister plenipotentiary until the arrival of the new ambassador William Drummond in May 1803. Drummond was recommended to the Company by the king according to the usual practice;<sup>1</sup> but he returned to England early in 1804 and Straton was again left in charge.<sup>2</sup>

The next appointment finally closed the Company's association with the embassy. On June 6, 1804, it was notified of the king's choice of Charles Arbuthnot<sup>3</sup> to take Drummond's place, but at the same time it was instructed to appoint a consul-general at Constantinople to look after its commercial interests so that in future the ambassador could attend only to political concerns.<sup>4</sup> Isaac Morier, a member of the Company who had been born and had for many years lived and traded in Smyrna, was accordingly elected to the new office in August 1804 at a salary of £1,200 per annum, and two years later the Company secured a royal commission for him as consul-general.<sup>5</sup> His appointment marked the complete severance of the two functions which had for so long been combined by the holders of the embassy. Henceforth the crown appointed and paid the ambassador, whose duties now became exclusively diplomatic, and the Company's business passed into the hands of its new agent at Constantinople. The change was a proof of the growing importance of the embassy, which the Egyptian expedition had done so much to emphasize, and a sign that the state was gaining power to take back into its own hands the functions which in the days of its weakness it had delegated to the Company.

The tendency to trench upon the Company's old preserves, which was inspired by the political needs of the time, received further illustration at the same time that the embassy was being taken over. In that year (1804) the Company was notified that the king had appointed John Philip Morier, son of Isaac, to be consul-general in Albania, the Morea, and adjacent territory, all his expenses being borne by the crown. To preserve its privileges the Company held a formal election confirming the appointment,

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 178. George III to the Company, Jan. 14, 1803. Drummond had been minister plenipotentiary at Naples since 1801.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Straton, Mar. 2, 1804.

<sup>3</sup> Arbuthnot had held diplomatic positions in Sweden and Portugal and was under-secretary for foreign affairs 1803-4. His life is in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 180. George III to the Company, June 6, 1804; S.P. 105. 122, p. 442.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Company to Straton, Aug. 10, 1804; S.P. 105. 123. Company to Morier, Apr. 11, 1806. The salary was raised to £1,500 per annum in 1815 (S.P. 105. 135. Morier to the Company, July 10, 1815).



and it was still asserting its chartered rights in this area as late as 1821;<sup>1</sup> but it never exercised the slightest authority over Morier and his successors, the object of whose mission was purely political. Their office was created to enable an eye to be kept on French intrigues in the Ionian islands and to open up a channel of communication with Ali, pasha of Janina; and in neither matter could the merchants claim a voice.

Egypt itself was similarly withdrawn in large measure from the direct control of the Company. After Baldwin's removal a certain Colonel Missett seems to have acted as agent for the East India Company in Egypt, but the Levant Company, though it had no consuls of its own there, continued to regard the country as within its privileges and forbade all trade to Alexandria except by members.<sup>2</sup> I have been unable to discover whether Colonel Missett, who remained in Egypt until 1807, had any commission from the Turkey Company, but when General Stuart, who commanded the British expeditionary force in the country, named Samuel Briggs to be acting vice-consul at Alexandria, the Company confirmed the step and elected him consul with a view to facilitating its commercial interests.<sup>3</sup> Egypt had, however, been proved to be of too great importance to be neglected any longer by the government, and Sebastiani's mission and famous report gave an edge to fears of new French designs upon the country in the future. Accordingly the merchants were notified in the following year (1804) that the king had appointed Charles Lock to be consul-general in Egypt and intended to defray all the expenses of his office.<sup>4</sup> They thereupon made him free of the Company and elected him as their consul at Cairo placing the vice-consulate at Alexandria under him.<sup>5</sup> In the same way they confirmed the appointment of Henry Salt his successor to the office in 1815;<sup>6</sup> but the step was a purely formal one. They retained their commercial monopoly and still controlled the consulate at Alexandria, but the chief British agent in Egypt

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 181. Harrowby to the Company, June 30, 1804; S.P. 105. 122. Company to J. P. Morier, July 17, 1804; S.P. 105. 124. Company to J. Cartwright, Mar. 29, 1821. The consul-general resided at Janina.

<sup>2</sup> W. F. Lord, *England and France in the Mediterranean*, p. 130; S.P. 105. 122. Company to Elgin, Apr. 30, 1802.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Company to Alex. Straton, May 24, 1803; to Sam Briggs, May 24, 1803.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 109, number 179. Hawkesbury to Company, Feb. 15, 1804.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Charles Lock, Jan. 20, 1804; Genl. Ct. of Company, Feb. 17, 1804.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 123. Company to Henry Salt, Aug. 31, 1815.

after 1804 was the servant of the crown and another rent had been made in the Company's monopoly.

Nor was the government the only intruder upon the area of the Company's rights. Events in Egypt had made the East India Company more conscious than ever of its interests in the Ottoman Empire, and to safeguard those interests it now secured a foothold within the limits of its old rival's charter. Lock was sent to Egypt mainly for its purposes; Isaac Morier acted as its agent as well as being consul-general for the Levant Company; and in 1799 it even appointed an agent of its own, one John Barker, at Aleppo with a salary of £1,200 per annum to preserve communications with the east via Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf.<sup>1</sup> The exclusive rights of the Turkey merchants were thus cracking beneath the pressure of changing circumstances as the eastern question unfolded itself, and the days had gone for ever when the control of British interests in Turkey could be abandoned to a commercial company. Its trading rights still remained intact, but even these were menaced, for already new doctrines of economic freedom were in the air, new conditions were being created by the enormous industrial expansion at home, which threatened a short survival to all economic monopolies.

Yet another outcome of the Egyptian expedition was the ruin of French trade in the Levant. It had begun to show signs of retrogression in the years immediately before the Revolution. In part this was the result of a decline in the quality of the cloth exported to Turkey, due to the frauds and the negligence of the manufacturers which developed as control of the industry from Paris was relaxed, and as even the government inspectors, caught by the prevailing ideas of greater liberty in industry and trade, came to doubt the efficacy of the rules they were expected to enforce.<sup>2</sup> Partly, also, it was the result of the increasing trade done during the later decades of the century by the English in shalloons which prejudiced the sale of the French light woollen cloths. These shalloons, which formed a new feature of the Levant Com-

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 137. Petition of John Barker, Sept. 27, 1819; S.P. 105. 127. Spencer Smith to the Company, Dec. 24, 1799. From the letters in S.P. 110. 51 it appears that one of the Aleppo factors—probably Robert Abbott—was acting as agent for the East India Company as early as 1792, but I have been unable to find any details of his appointment.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, 18<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, pp. 489–90. The average annual export of French cloths dropped from 72,792 pieces in the early years of Louis XVI reign to 50,000 in these later years.

pany's trade, came mainly from Halifax, and gave a great impetus to the prosperity of that town.<sup>1</sup> But it was the economic disorganization due to the Revolution at home, and the dislocation of the trade routes in the Mediterranean owing to the naval war with England after 1793 which most seriously diminished the traffic done between Marseilles and Turkey;<sup>2</sup> and the attack on Egypt completed the collapse. The seizure of their province by Napoleon, without any excuse or warning, roused the Turks against their old ally, and the French chargé d'affaires at Constantinople was at once flung into prison along with 2,000 of his countrymen who were then living in Turkey.<sup>3</sup> In the treaty with England which followed, the sultan further pledged himself to prohibit all French trade in his ports.<sup>4</sup> For the next three years—during which there was a complete suspension of intercourse between France and Turkey—the English had a unique opportunity to capture the Levant markets; and the signing of peace between the consulate and the sultan in 1801 scarcely affected this advantage, for the battle of the Nile and the events which followed had given England the complete command of the Mediterranean. Henceforth the difficulties and dangers of transport effectively throttled all French trade; and so long as the war lasted the English possessed a virtual monopoly of the Turkey market, for the trade of the Dutch and the Italians, who both fell within the sphere of Napoleon's domination, suffered equally with that of France.<sup>5</sup> A French vessel which arrived at Alexandria in 1808 was said to have been the first there for five years,<sup>6</sup> and the same conditions existed throughout the Levant ports. The English frigates carried all enemy ships to Malta, and as its rivals were annihilated the English flag reigned supreme throughout the Mediterranean. English trade there came to employ not only native ships and crews, but many which had once served in the mercantile marines of Venice, Ragusa, and Genoa.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, in spite of the war with the Porte into which England was dragged in 1807 in support of Russia, the Turks were more favourably inclined to her than they were to France. Fear of Napoleon, whose armies were encamped near their frontiers

<sup>1</sup> Addit. MSS. 38223, ff. 139-40.

<sup>2</sup> Beaujour, writing of the French factories in Greece in 1797 (p. 445), said: 'I will only tell you that the present war has ruined a part of our factories; that the others are approaching slowly to ruin for want of protection.'

<sup>3</sup> Zinkeisen, vii, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Martens, vi, pp. 571-2.

<sup>5</sup> Larpent, i, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Dodwell, *Mehemet Ali*, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Driault, *Mohammed Ali*, &c., pp. 190-1.

in Dalmatia, compelled them to adopt a submissive attitude and to choose English rather than French hostility when the choice had to be made in 1807, but they had not forgotten the Egyptian adventure, and they were aware of Napoleon's intrigues against them with the tsar, and in Greece and Albania. The emperor never managed to impose his continental system upon them, and in 1812, when disguise became less necessary, their real sentiments were soon revealed. The Porte, complained the French chargé d'affaires, was *plus Anglaise que les Anglais mêmes*.<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak of war with Turkey in 1807 hindered for a time the expansion of British trade which these favourable conditions encouraged.<sup>2</sup> The Russians had exploited their alliance with Turkey at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt to wring several concessions from the sultan, and to further that policy of peaceful penetration in the Ottoman Empire which they had long pursued. They had secured free passage for their ships through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles; the sultan had been forced to surrender his share in the protectorate of the Ionian Islands to the tsar; and a decree of 1802 had bound the Porte not to remove the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia within seven years of appointment without the concurrence of Russia, whose creatures the two princes were at this time. In 1804 pressure from Russia and England had stopped the Porte from recognizing Napoleon as emperor, and in 1805, on the outbreak of war between France and the third coalition, the tsar's minister at Constantinople had demanded of the sultan the renewal of the former offensive and defensive alliance and a protectorate over all the Greek Church Christians within the Turkish empire. At the same time he pressed for acceptance of the demands of the Serbs, whose revolt the year before had from the first received the sympathy and encouragement of Russia. It seemed as though the Porte was sinking rapidly into a vassal of its great northern neighbour and the Turks were restive beneath these enforced concessions; but they were powerless to resist.

The situation altered, however, when Napoleon took Vienna,

<sup>1</sup> Lane Poole, *Stratford Canning*, i, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> The figures for exports and imports show at a glance the result of the war:

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
	£	£
1806 . . .	129,695	136,153
1807 . . .	19,167	113,258
1808 . . .	13,686	57,357
1809 . . .	101,860	184,920

routed the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz, and forced the former out of the war by the Peace of Pressburg, 1806. That peace gave him Dalmatia and part of Croatia and brought his troops to the confines of Turkey; and it at once became his resolution to use that advantage in order to combat the influence of Russia—with whom he was still at war—at Constantinople. He accordingly dispatched General Sebastiani to the Porte to re-establish French influence and to demand the closing of the Bosphorus to Russian ships. Any renewal of the alliances with England and Russia by the sultan, Sebastiani was to state, would be regarded by Napoleon as a breach of neutrality; and the proximity of a large French army in Dalmatia lent force to the threat. Placed thus between two millstones the Turks chose to brave the wrath of the tsar, and, encouraged by Sebastiani, they deposed the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia. This was a breach of the agreement of 1802, and the Russians, failing to get satisfaction, replied by occupying the two principalities in force. That produced war, which the Turks, inspired by Napoleon's victory at Jena, declared in December 1806.

England was in alliance with the tsar against France, and the ambassador at Constantinople, Charles Arbuthnot, had backed his Russian colleague Italinski in resisting the restoration of French influence which followed Sebastiani's arrival. To lend force to his protests a small squadron of three ships was sent up to Constantinople, but on the declaration of war against Russia it departed with Italinski on board leaving only the frigate *Endymion* behind. After the outbreak of hostilities the British government determined to take stronger measures to support its ally, and Arbuthnot was ordered 'immediately and peremptorily' to insist upon the restoration of the hospodars, the opening of the straits to Russian vessels, and a decisive break with France by the Porte, the proof of which was to be the dismissal of Sebastiani. To support these demands it was planned to send a powerful fleet under Sir John Duckworth to the Golden Horn with instructions to bombard Constantinople if the Porte proved recalcitrant.

But before Duckworth could pass the Dardanelles Arbuthnot had fled from Constantinople with the English merchants there in dramatic circumstances. When the ambassador made clear the resolutions of his court and threatened to depart if its demands were not immediately conceded the Turks were at first 'amazed and dejected'; but the news of Napoleon's continued successes against

Russia and the mingled threats and encouragements of Sebastiani decided them to risk the hostility of England rather than incur the wrath of the invincible Corsican. Realizing from Arbuthnot's firm attitude that this decision meant war they began to prepare to seize the English ambassador and factors and the *Endymion* as hostages. Arbuthnot was denied a permit for the transit of his dispatches, batteries began to be placed along the shores of the Bosphorus under the supervision of Sebastiani to repel the English fleet when it arrived, and it became clear that the sultan's advisers had no intention of accepting the English terms. To frustrate the projected coup, of which he had reliable information, Arbuthnot, on the pretext of a banquet, assembled the British factory on board the *Endymion* on January 29, 1807. Only he, the captain, and one merchant were in the secret; but when night fell the ship's cables were cut, and she slipped away without warning to the Turks, passed the Dardanelles in safety, and joined Duckworth's squadron, which had assembled off Tenedos. The merchants protested against this hurried evacuation, especially as some of their women-folk had to be left behind;<sup>1</sup> and when Hobhouse was in Constantinople a few years later Arbuthnot's fears that imprisonment, torture, and even death would have been the fate of all hostages when the fleet appeared before the city were generally ridiculed by the factors; but it is certain that a coup was being planned, and the ambassador had instructions to take all possible steps for the safety of those who were in his charge.<sup>2</sup>

Duckworth's unsuccessful expedition to Constantinople which followed produced war,<sup>3</sup> and for the next two years Morier, the consul-general, and the merchants remained in Malta awaiting the restoration of peace. After the Peace of Tilsit, which converted Russia—in support of whom England had become involved in this struggle with the sultan—from an ally to a foe, Sir Arthur Paget was sent to the Dardanelles to try to put an end to the war; but the Turks, though they showed themselves friendly disposed and suspected that the settlement at Tilsit boded no good to them,

<sup>1</sup> Arbuthnot wrote to Sebastiani asking him to see that the Porte behaved to the women like a civilized power (Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, &c., p. 87). He handed over English affairs to the Danish Minister Hubsch.

<sup>2</sup> For the whole episode see Hansard 10, *Arbuthnot's Letters*, pp. 504-25; Driault, *La Politique Orientale*, &c., pp. 27-87; J. Holland Rose, 'Essay on Duckworth's Expedition' in *The Indecisiveness of Modern Warfare*; Lord Broughton's *Travels*, ii, Appendix, pp. 508-15.

<sup>3</sup> When Duckworth retired all British property in Turkey was confiscated and all British subjects made prisoners (Adair, *Mission to Vienna*, p. 212).

dared not defy Napoleon and make peace. The following year their courage revived. The Spanish revolt had pinned down large French forces and weakened their position in Central Europe; it became increasingly clear that the Franco-Russian pact at Tilsit had been based and depended for its continuance upon grandiose schemes to partition the Ottoman Empire; and the Turks knew that England alone was likely to defend them successfully against such a fate. In April 1808 they wrote to Lord Collingwood, who commanded in the Mediterranean, offering to renew negotiations for peace; and in September Robert Adair arrived at the Dardanelles. After three months of discussion terms were arranged and the Peace of the Dardanelles was signed in January 1809. It provided for a full restoration of the capitulations and of the property of the merchants which had been sequestered during the war. In return the Turks secured the abolition of the old abuse of the ambassadors' *barats*—or patents of protection—which had formerly been sold with a lavish hand, removing many Turkish subjects from the jurisdiction of the sultan's officials. Henceforth only those actually serving as dragomen were to enjoy English protection, and no more Ottoman subjects were to be named as English consuls; but this last provision remained a dead letter and Greeks and other Levantines continued to act as agents for the Levant Company as long as it survived.

The peace opened for the Company a period, destined to be the last chapter in its long history, in which it enjoyed a prosperity never before attained. Since 1802 its trade had been well maintained and it had been able to dispense with any further assistance from the government until the year 1808, when the exceptional circumstances produced by the war with Turkey temporarily suspended its business and obliged it to apply for another grant of £5,000—the last vote of its kind which it was necessary to make. During these years the number of ships employed by it rose steadily, and thanks to the act of 1797 its area of operations was broadened. In 1800 impositions were paid on goods carried on 47 vessels, in 1803 and 1804 on 40 vessels, in 1805 on 75 vessels, in 1806 on 69 vessels, and in 1808 on 96 vessels.<sup>1</sup> Most of these cargoes came from Smyrna, but a considerable number were brought from Leghorn, and others from Hamburg and Amsterdam. By 1809, as a result of the prolonged struggle in Europe, all the

<sup>1</sup> These figures are from S.P. 105. 172. Register Book of Impositions, 1797–1808.

Company's rivals in the Levant market had either disappeared or been excluded by English sea power; and with the monopoly which it thus secured it possessed also, thanks to the supremacy of the British fleet, the safety of communications that was essential to its full exploitation. Moreover, the continental system which, at its height, closed the whole coast-line of Europe except Scandinavia and the Balkans added greatly to the importance of the Turkish Empire as a funnel or back door through which British goods could enter the continent in spite of Napoleon's decrees. Sugar was smuggled into Germany through Salonika, being conveyed on mules from there to Belgrade, and on the Dalmatian coast one firm alone employed 500 horses to carry the forbidden products of England into central Europe. It is significant that in 1812, the year of the Russian campaign, English exports to Turkey totalled £311,029—the highest figure since the seventeenth century.

But the main reason for the new prosperity which was coming to the Company was one that had nothing to do with the great war. It lay in the enormous expansion of industry, and in particular of the manufacture of cotton goods, in England which resulted from the inventions of the pioneers of the industrial revolution. The prodigious growth of this industry, which was soon to make Lancashire the draper of nearly all mankind, began in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. The value of the cotton goods exported from England, which in 1780 had been only £355,060, rose to £1,875,046 in 1791 and to over 7 million pounds in 1801.<sup>1</sup> By 1825 it had reached £30,795,000.<sup>2</sup> Herein lay the chief secret of the increase which took place in the Levant Company's trade. The new cotton goods, cheap, durable, bright in colour, and light in weight, made an immediate appeal to the inhabitants of the Levant and swept on one side even the competition of similar stuffs of local manufacture. Drovetti, the French consul at Cairo, reported ruefully in 1812 that all the warehouses of Asia and Africa were stuffed with British goods which flowed in so cheaply that in Egypt native manufacturers were being compelled to close down,<sup>3</sup> and in 1814 the Company wrote to Isaac Morier:

The desire for British manufactured goods which has been manifested by the subjects of the Porte of every description opens a door to an

<sup>1</sup> Lipson, ii, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard 12, p. 1200. Huskisson's speech, Mar. 25, 1825.

<sup>3</sup> Driault, *Mohammed Ali*, pp. 187-9, 190-1.



extension of our trade of the highest importance to this nation. The quantities of these articles consumed in Turkey even under the difficulties opposed to them have far exceeded our calculation, and we have every reason to believe if those obstructions are removed, the demand will be prodigious.<sup>1</sup>

Colonial goods were also being poured into the Levant, especially sugar and coffee, which sold so cheaply that the demand for Yemen coffee almost ceased.<sup>2</sup>

The full effect of the industrial development at home was, as the Company surmised, not felt until the war was over. The peace of 1815 did nothing to shake the supremacy which had been acquired in the Levant markets, for the continental nations were too crippled by the long war to become dangerous rivals, and in any case, with a start of nearly half a century in the growth of modern industry, serious competition from any of the more backward European states was hardly possible. The following tables of imports and exports illustrate not only the expansion of the Company's trade<sup>3</sup> but several other points of interest:

*Imports from Turkey to Great Britain\**

(shillings and pence omitted)

Year	Total official value of imports to Great Britain	Through London	Through the English outports	Chief articles (official values) England
1812	£243,894	£213,675	£30,218	Madder roots £107,218
1817	£186,289	£140,928	£45,361	Madder roots £78,808; currants £29,943; cotton wool only £799
1818	£369,052	£248,358	£115,056	Madder roots £111,825; raw silk £41,846; raisins £41,599; cotton wool £24,112
1820	£417,158	£333,207	£75,856	Madder roots £120,677; raw silk £122,315; raisins £43,281; cotton wool £7,863
1824	£746,848	Not given	Not given	Madder roots £154,412; raw silk £180,424; raisins £46,748; cotton wool £249,271
1825	£1,207,035	Not given	Not given	Madder roots £190,953; raisins £53,670; raw silk £193,293; cotton wool £611,547

\* These figures are taken from the Customs Ledgers of Imports (Customs 4) preserved in the P.R.O.

Among the imports the large quantities of madder for dyeing purposes was a sign of the enormous expansion which was taking place in the textile manufactures in England; and the extraordinary rise in the amount of raw cotton imported after 1820 bore witness to the same phenomenon—and to the rapid development of Egypt under its new Albanian ruler. The figures for the exports of cotton manufactured goods, which by 1825 formed fully two-thirds of the

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 123. Company to Morier, June 22, 1814.

<sup>2</sup> Driault, *Mohammed Ali*, &c., pp. 189–90.

<sup>3</sup> The increasing number of ships employed in the Turkey trade after 1815 is a further proof of its expansion. See Appendix III.

*Exports from Great Britain to Turkey<sup>1</sup>*

(shillings and pence omitted)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Real or declared value, Great Britain</i>	<i>Official value</i>	<i>Real or declared value of goods exported through London</i>	<i>Real or declared value of goods exported through the English outports</i>	<i>Chief articles (real or declared value) England</i>
1812	£311,029	Not given	£296,527	£14,501	Cotton goods £224,078; sugar (refined and crushed) £50,101.
1816	£299,241	£256,802	£263,583	£24,479	Cotton goods £188,899 (official value = £165,799); sugar £24,220 (official value = £18,357); tin (wrought and unwrought) £26,016 (official value = £19,218).
1818	£806,530	£882,132	£631,302	£170,856	Cotton goods £545,217 (official value = £657,735); sugar £40,771 (official value = £30,784); iron bar £69,356; tin £37,230.
1820	£551,791	£787,850	£465,687	£84,125	Cotton goods £412,184 (official value = £658,587); iron goods £32,878 (official value = £35,893); sugar £35,364 (official value = £37,209).
1824	£747,738	£1,267,301	£584,544	£157,424	Cotton goods £561,356 (official value = £1,049,983); sugar £56,180 (official value = £81,545).
1825	£633,147	£1,079,671	£490,992	£133,805	Cotton goods £482,355 (official value = £929,903); iron goods £12,372 (official value = £13,670); sugar £25,786 (official value = £30,058); woollen goods £8,198 (official value = £6,788).

\* These figures are taken from the Customs Ledgers of Exports (Customs 8) preserved in the P.R.O.

*Value of cotton goods (declared value) exported to Turkey<sup>1</sup>*

1827	Cotton manufactured goods	£367,865	Cotton yarn	£40,684
1828	"	"	"	£12,351
1829	"	"	"	£40,776
1830	"	"	"	£90,109

*Official value of woollen goods exported to Turkey<sup>1</sup>*

1772	£59,191	1793	£9,078
1773	£62,732	1794	£6,395
1774	£89,566	1795	£12,228
1775	£131,857	1796	£28,580
1776	£115,306	1797	£3,056
1790	£15,070	1798	£13,927
1791	£41,095	1799	£47,398
1792	£34,334		

*Declared value of woollen goods exported to Turkey*

1815	£10,926	1820	£12,871
1816	£11,072	1821	£3,772
1817	£30,144	1822	£1,744
1818	£29,643	1823	£4,698
1819	£15,490	1824	£10,778

<sup>1</sup> Figures from Marshall.

total exports, show in concise form the secret of the Company's closing years of prosperity. The corresponding values for the sharply declining export of woollen goods, once the backbone of the trade, further serve to prove how the new cotton fabrics had dominated the market. The rising importance of the outports is also well illustrated. It had become necessary by the nineteenth century to appoint collectors of duties at Liverpool, Bristol, Hull, Grimsby, Glasgow, Leith, and Dublin; but until almost the last decade of the Company's life London preserved the lion's share of its trade. In 1808 £5,072 6s. 11*d.* was collected in impositions, to which Liverpool contributed £758 12s. 5*d.*, Bristol £82 18s. 6*d.*, Hull £68 1s. 4*d.*, and Leith £54 6s. 8*d.*;<sup>1</sup> while in Ireland there were only ten members of the Company in 1815.<sup>2</sup> The above tables show how the outports gained at the expense of London in the following ten years. Their share of exports rose from under one-twentieth in 1812 to over one-fifth in 1825. In imports they jumped from one-seventh in 1812 to just under a quarter in 1820.

The expansion of the Company's trade was reflected in an increase of membership which by 1825 brought the number of freemen up to about 800.<sup>3</sup> Between 1795 and 1820, 816 new names were enrolled.<sup>4</sup> A few were complimentary elections, like that of Lord Nelson in February 1801, but the names of Nathaniel Meyer Rothschild, John and Robert Gladstone, and Robert Peel, which appear among the admissions, prove that the Company was attracting the attention of some of the keenest brains in the commercial and financial community of the time.

Signs of the new prosperity of the Company were also visible in its factories in Turkey, though they do not seem to have recovered the numerical strength of the seventeenth century. The average attendance at meetings of the Constantinople factory for the period 1806-13 was only 5-6, and it had not risen beyond 10 by 1823. At Smyrna the increase was more striking. For every ship which went to Constantinople ten went to Smyrna, and the factory grew from about 8-10 in 1813 to at least 25 by 1821.<sup>5</sup> Its trade had expanded so much that in 1816 a vice-consul was established under the existing consul 'for the better dispatch

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 172.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 135. William Hautenville to the Company, Sept. 20, 1815.

<sup>3</sup> *Account of the Levant Company*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> From the lists in S.P. 105. 333.

<sup>5</sup> Semple, ii, p. 188. The figures are from the minutes of various factory meetings recorded in S.P. 105. 134, 135, 136, 141, 142, 338.

of increased public business'.<sup>1</sup> John Barker, who had been appointed as agent for the East India Company at Aleppo in 1799, was also recognized as consul by the Levant Company four years later, and paid a regular salary; but the Aleppo factory never revived. There were many years when no consulage was collected there, and in 1824 Barker—who was still consul—was the only Englishman residing in the city.

On the Syrian coast the Company had agents—who were all Levantines—at Tripoli, Latachia, Jaffa, and Acre, but in 1820 Peter Abbott was appointed consul at Acre and Beirut, and wrote in 1823 that twenty English ships had touched at the latter port in ten months.<sup>2</sup> In Cyprus one Vandiziano, a Venetian subject (who had been appointed in 1799), acted as consul until the dissolution of the Company; and in 1810 Robert Adair, the ambassador, as much for political as commercial reasons, appointed George Reggio as consul in Crete, which the Company confirmed.<sup>3</sup> On the islands of Chios, Milos, Sira, and Zea Greeks served as vice-consuls,<sup>4</sup> as they also did at Athens and Nauplia.<sup>5</sup>

An Englishman still held the office of consul-general of the Morea and resided at Patras, the centre of the Greek currant trade. In 1820 currants to the (official) value of £42,319 were imported by the Company, but in the next few years the Greek revolt almost stopped the traffic.<sup>6</sup> The Ionian Islands (Zante and Cephalonia) also exported large quantities of currants to England after 1815,<sup>7</sup> but there is no evidence that the Levant Company any longer shared in this trade. The Salonika factory continued to prosper, and there was a consul at Adrianople after the Napoleonic wars.<sup>8</sup> In 1813 a new consulate was established at Bucharest, but the holder, William Wilkinson, was recalled and the experiment abandoned in 1816, on the ground that circumstances unforeseen

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 124. Company to Morier, Dec. 12, 1816.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 124. Company to Cartwright, Aug. 15, 1820; to Abbott, Sept. 20, 1820; S.P. 105. 141. Abbott to the Company, Jan. 3, 27, 1823.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 123. Company to Morier, Oct. 11, 1810.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 123. Company to Werry, July 7, 1813. According to Broughton these vice-consuls were inadequately paid. He says that the English vice-consul on Chios only got £12 per annum, whereas the French vice-consul was receiving £500-£600 per annum (*Travels*, ii, p. 12).

<sup>5</sup> Morritt, pp. 171, 209; Broughton, i, pp. 242-3.

<sup>6</sup> In 1824 currant imports were only valued at £814.

<sup>7</sup> Currants to the (official) value of £74,246 in 1818, £91,462 in 1820, and £122,801 in 1824 came to England from the Ionian Islands.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. William Lee was appointed in 1815 at a salary of £400 per annum (S.P. 105. 136. T. N. Black to secretary of the Company, April 10, 1818).

at the time of the consul's appointment had rendered residence at Bucharest as useless to British interests as his trading ventures there had proved unprofitable to himself.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt appears to have been one of the most flourishing centres of the Company's trade in these closing days of its life. Samuel Briggs remained at Alexandria until the outbreak of war with Turkey in 1807 and the unfortunate effort which was made to seize Egypt by an English expedition in that year. Then he was obliged to withdraw to Malta, but he was back again by 1810, and the consulate henceforth had an uninterrupted history. Trade increased there rapidly in the later days of the great war. Formerly those English goods which had been consumed in Egypt, such as cloth, tin, iron, lead, and hardware, had reached it in an indirect way from Marseilles or Leghorn, but now they began to be conveyed direct in English vessels and increased both in quantity and variety. Cotton goods, jewellery, clocks, dyes, shawls, and arms were added to the earlier imports, and their cheapness soon won a ready market for them all. During the Napoleonic war the French were almost completely excluded from trade and not a single commercial house of theirs survived.<sup>2</sup> In spite of prohibitions by the Porte a thriving traffic was done in Egyptian corn for the British garrisons in Sicily and Malta and for the army in Spain—a trade which became one of the foundations of Mohammed Ali's financial independence. After the war a new incentive was given to the commerce of Egypt by the increasing demand for raw cotton in England, imports of which reached impressive figures from 1820 onwards.<sup>3</sup> It was now too that the Red Sea was again penetrated. Under Mohammed Ali the suzerainty of the sultan became little more than nominal, and the progressive and ambitious Albanian was only too ready to promote anything which might contribute to the welfare of his adopted country. From 1809 ships began once more to arrive at Suez laden with Indian goods, and the old

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 123. Company to Morier, Oct. 27, 1813; Company to Wilkinson, July 11, 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Driault, *Mohammed Ali*, pp. 244-5.

<sup>3</sup> Imports of cotton wool from the Levant (chiefly from Egypt):

1822	.	.	.	.	425,850 lb. weight
1823	.	.	.	.	1,234,788 „ „
1824	.	.	.	.	7,910,918 „ „

Imports from Egypt only:

1827	.	.	.	.	4,084,741 lb. weight
1828	.	.	.	.	6,454,386 „ „
1829	.	.	.	.	5,894,480 „ „

prohibition soon became a dead letter.<sup>1</sup> By 1823 there were at least eleven English merchants living in Alexandria,<sup>2</sup> and the factory was probably one of the most important in the Levant. The consul-general resided at Cairo, but I have found no mention of any members of the Levant Company living there.

The closing years of the Company's life were uneventful. Isaac Morier died in 1817 and was succeeded by John Cartwright, who had formerly served the Company at Patras as consul-general in the Morea. The severance which had been made in 1804 of the Company's concerns from the embassy worked well, and under Cartwright, who was destined to be the last of the Company's consuls-general, as under Morier, there was no trace of friction with the ambassadors. The Greek revolt—which led to some interference with British shipping by the Greeks in the eastern Mediterranean and to inevitable complaints from the Turks that British subjects had violated their neutrality by aiding the rebels—was the one factor which ruffled the smooth surface of these last prosperous years; and the end came, not because of any disaster or through any failure of duty, but simply because the Company had outlived its usefulness.

The expanding power of the state in wealth and executive force no longer made it necessary to delegate authority and grant monopolies to subordinate organizations as the Tudors and Stuarts had been obliged to do, and the growing closeness of the ties, both political and commercial, between England and Turkey, pointed the way to the establishment of full government control not only over the ambassador but over all other representatives and agents in the Levant. Friction with the Porte about the conduct of English ships at the time of the Greek revolt helped to emphasize the inconvenience of a dual control of British interests and the need for a more direct hold on the consular establishments in Turkey. At the same time the whole drift of economic thought, under the inspiration of Adam Smith's teaching, was increasingly hostile to the maintenance of any such restrictions upon trade as were involved in the existence of an exclusive Company. To a generation which was eagerly adopting the doctrines of commercial freedom such a system of restraint seemed harmful in itself, apart

<sup>1</sup> Driault, *Mohammed Ali*, pp. 42-3, 57-61, 95-101, 116-18; Dodwell, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> In that year eleven merchants signed a petition to the consul-general asking for the appointment of an English chaplain (S.P. 105. 141. Factory at Alexandria to Peter Lee, July 24, 1823).

from any consideration of the details of its actual working; and in William Huskisson, who became president of the board of trade in 1823, the champions of greater liberty in trade had a leader who possessed the power to translate ideas into acts. The budgets which he inspired have rightly been called the first of the free-trade budgets of the nineteenth century; his reciprocity act of 1823 left the navigation laws a mere shadow, and virtually destroyed the old insular protectionism; and it was he who took the step which led to the disappearance of the Levant Company.

Hitherto all the consular establishments of the country had been regulated by no fixed principle or rule. In some places fees were levied on ships, sometimes according to, sometimes irrespective of, their size; in other places they were levied on the cargoes carried; and even in the same country the system of remuneration for the consuls varied from port to port. Thus at Bordeaux the consul was paid a salary, while at Marseilles he was not in receipt of any regular allowance. Huskisson determined to abolish this confusion, and to pay all consuls a fixed stipend out of the public purse. That led to the decision to take over from the Levant Company the control and upkeep of the consular establishments in Turkey—a step which was powerfully backed by political motives, for in the disturbed condition of the sultan's empire at the time the attempt to trade was producing all kinds of intricate and important questions of international law, both with contending parties in Turkey and with other neutral trading countries, and it was clearly desirable in such circumstances that all British agents should be in direct subordination to the government.<sup>1</sup>

Early in May 1824 the foreign secretary, George Canning, had a conversation with Mr. George Liddell, the Levant Company's secretary, in which he first opened the matter and assured him that if the Company was required to hand over the appointment and control of consuls in Turkey it would merely be in pursuance of the plan to bring all British consuls under direct government supervision and would involve no disapproval of the Company's conduct.<sup>2</sup> There the matter rested until the following year. On Friday, February 11, 1825, a special general court of the Company was summoned to meet at South Sea House, with Lord Grenville, the veteran governor, in the chair, to hear a new communication

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1825, pp. 112–13. Most of which is taken from Huskisson's speech, Mar. 25, 1825 (*Hansard* 12, p. 1220).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 125. George Liddell to Canning, May 11, 1824.

from Canning. He now wrote to advise the merchants that a bill was being prepared for the better regulation of the consular establishments, one object of which would be to transfer the Company's authority in this respect to the crown. The change was designed purely from motives of public expediency and from no feeling of disrespect to the Company or blame for its past administration and he hoped that it would readily acquiesce in the transfer. The letter closed with a hint which decided the Company's fate. 'I cannot refrain from suggesting to you', the foreign secretary wrote, 'whether it may not be expedient to give up the remaining privileges of your charter, which being no longer connected with the protection of public interests may be deemed by parliament and the public to be useless and injurious restrictions upon trade.'<sup>1</sup>

It was clear that the Company would have no justification for continuing to exclude others from the Levant trade and for levying consulage when it was no longer performing any public service in maintaining consular establishments in Turkey; and on wider grounds the duties it collected were regarded as an impediment to trade. In his speech to the house of commons a few weeks later (March 25) Huskisson emphasized this point. 'It becomes the more important', he said, 'not to neglect this opportunity of affording relief to the Levant trade, as the dues which the Company is authorized to levy are very considerable, amounting to a tax not much short of two per cent. upon the whole of that trade, a charge quite sufficient in these times to divert a considerable part of it from the shipping of this country to that of other states.' Only one member—Mr. Baring—made a direct reference to the Company in the debate which followed, and he stigmatized it as an establishment which although not badly conducted was from its very nature 'mischievous and prejudicial'.<sup>2</sup>

These sentiments were shared by the members of the Company itself. When Canning's letter had been read the governor declared himself to be in favour of surrendering the charter since little would remain of their old privileges but the monopoly which excluded all who were not free of the Company from the Turkey trade, and no useful purpose could be served by maintaining this 'invidious restraint'. He closed with a paean upon freedom of trade

It will be no less your pride than your interest to take your full share in the removal of every obstacle which in the slightest degree embarrasses

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Levant Company, &c.*, pp. 4-6. The letter was dated Jan 29, 1825.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard 12, pp. 1221, 1227.



or impedes the working of this great engine of national prosperity [i.e. trade]. . . . Here in England were first developed to statesmen and legislators the rights and the advantages of unrestricted trade. . . . Here first was it demonstrated that these are fundamental maxims of policy and Justice alike conducive to private happiness, productive of national prosperity, and consonant to all rightful exercise of public legislation. To the glory of the discovery . . . we have now added the still higher praise of its general reception, its just and enlightened application.

Several resolutions were then moved, and it was unanimously agreed to offer to surrender the charters. At a second general court on February 23 the governor was unanimously authorized to order the great seal of the Company to be affixed to the petition for the unconditional surrender of the charters. This petition prayed for leave to relinquish the Company's privileges because 'in consequence of the arrangements which your majesty has been pleased to direct in relation to the commerce to and from the places mentioned in the said charters, it hath appeared to your majesty's petitioners that the privileges granted to and possessed by them will no longer be conducive to the public interests or necessary to the protection of their commerce'.

The desired permission was at once received, and an act was passed repealing all those statutes which related to the Levant Company and authorizing the transfer and disposal of its possessions and property for the public service. In return for the government assistance which it had been given in the past, its property, money, and effects were now all transferred to the crown which was to pay any debts due; and the treasury was authorized to grant pensions or allowances to those officers of the Company in England who would lose their positions because of the transfer. When the deed of surrender had been executed all patents and acts concerning the Company were to become void, all duties payable to it were to cease, and the corporation was to be dissolved.<sup>1</sup>

The deed of surrender which was then completed by the Company ended its life.

Know ye, and these presents witness [it ran] that the said governor and company of merchants of England trading into the Levant seas, in pursuance and performance of the said resolution, and by notice and in exercise of all power and authority, powers and authorities in them the

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes at Large*, xxviii, pp. 83-5. The amount handed over to the government was about £70,000. (*Account of the Levant Company*, p. 24.)

said governor and Company of merchants of England trading into the Levant seas in any wise vested or to them in any wise belonging or appertaining have surrendered and yielded up, and by these presents do surrender and yield up unto his said present majesty his heirs and successors all those two several hereinafter in part recited letters patent and all and singular the several grants, privileges, liberties, freedoms, authorities, powers, jurisdictions, immunities and other things whatsoever in and by the said letters patent or in and by either of them granted or confirmed.<sup>1</sup>

On May 19, 1825, the Company's authority finally passed to the crown, and the great instrument which the enterprise of Tudor England had forged to traffic with the dominions of the grand seignior ceased to be.<sup>2</sup>

The work done by it had never been spectacular, but none the less during the 244 years of its existence it made a solid if unobtrusive contribution to the expanding fabric of national life. It was one of the tributaries which fed the main stream of English economic development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, helping to transform the primitive, narrow commercial organization of pre-Tudor England into the great mercantile community of later days. Through its efforts capital was amassed, shipping was promoted, trade was increased, and the prices of eastern commodities were reduced, thus making possible a greater variety in the diet and clothing of all classes, and producing a more widespread refinement and higher standards of comfort. It contributed, in a material sense at least, to the greater richness and fullness of life which distinguished the post-Renaissance centuries from the rigid economy of the middle ages. With its help former luxuries became so plentiful that they were almost transformed into necessities; and at the same time a powerful impetus was given to domestic products, for the Levant market was one of the most important outlets for English cloth and tin. The material well-being of their countrymen would have been the poorer without the work of the Turkey merchants whose enterprise opened and sustained new areas of trade, and who, in braving the terrors of the grand seignior's empire, gave to history a striking example of intrepidity, a gallery of picturesque characters, and a fascinating story.

In more visible and definite form the Company's influence was

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Levant Company, &c.*, 1825.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 125. Company to Cartwright, May 19, 1825.

shown in two developments which both left their stamp on the history of England. The introduction of cotton has already been mentioned. It laid the foundations of the Lancashire cotton industry, which, though still on a small scale, was firmly established in the seventeenth century. As it expanded in the following century it drew its main supplies from the West Indies and America; but in 1824 the Levant merchants imported nearly eight million pounds of cotton, and the world owes the greatest of its textile industries to the men who first brought the raw cotton wool from Cyprus and Syria and successfully founded its manufacture in England. Coffee was also introduced into England by the Levant merchants and in time became as popular a commodity as the currants they imported. Probably coffee was first used in England during the reign of James I. In 1637 John Evelyn saw it drunk for the first time in his life in Balliol College, Oxford, but it was not until 1650 that the first coffee-house in this country—and probably in Christendom—was opened in the same city by a Jew called Jacob at the Angel Inn, which stood on the site of the present Examination Schools. Two years later a native of Ragusa, Pasqua Rosee, set one up in St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, London, and in the next few years the liquid, which had first been drunk as a medicine, became so popular that coffee-houses appeared in all parts of the city.<sup>1</sup> The part which they played in the social, literary, and political life of the next fifty years is well known.

Thousands of Englishmen who had been taken and enslaved by the Barbary corsairs or the Turks owed their liberation to the Company's agents. In the seventeenth century, when the depredations of the corsairs reached their height, the letters of the ambassadors contain frequent references to the redemption of captives, and large sums were spent on this work of mercy. The money was raised by collections which the government from time to time authorized the bishops to organize throughout the country for the purpose, and by gifts and bequests.<sup>2</sup> After the Restoration the Duchess of Dudley left by will £100 per annum for liberating English slaves, and her trustees handed the trust over to the Levant Company, which henceforth administered 'The Duchess of Dudley's Charity'.<sup>3</sup> In 1724 Thomas Betton left over £22,000 to the Iron-mongers' Company for charitable purposes, and one-half of the

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, *Early History of Coffee Houses*, pp. 56-87.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Trumbull gave £100 in 1713.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 153. June 19, 1673.

annual interest was to be applied 'every year for ever unto the redemption of British slaves in Turkey or Barbary.'<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century most of the enslaved were to be found in the Barbary states which had long passed out of the area of the Company's effective influence; and English naval power in the Mediterranean, together with the declining state of the Turkish Empire, made the voyage to and from the Levant a much safer one than it had been in the times which Hakluyt recorded. The Company's papers by their silence on the point appear to show that its trade suffered little molestation by piracy, and it is probable that after 1750 there were few if any English slaves in Turkey.

These facts do not exhaust the importance of the Company and its trade in the history of England. Later events have proved that its work was, in a political sense, complementary to that of its great rival, the East India Company. While the latter was laying the foundations of an Anglo-Indian empire the former was establishing a connexion with Turkey which was to become indispensable both from a geographical and a religious aspect to the maintenance of English power in India. The Turkish Empire, as Napoleon saw, was the key to India; and English interest and intervention in Turkey increased in proportion to English commitments further east. The work of the Levant Company was thus a sound preparation for the part which the country was to play in days when the eastern question was fully developed. Its trade did not plant the seeds of empire—save perhaps in Egypt—but it handed on to the English government a tradition of over two centuries of intercourse with Turkey and of representation at the sultan's court. It trained and employed scholars, writers, and collectors whose researches familiarized all educated men with the main outlines of eastern life and thought, and it had at the same time taught the Turk something of England and of her position among the nations of Europe. It disappeared in 1825 because the days when such a commercial monopoly was justified had passed away, and because its functions could then be more efficiently exercised by the government; but in dying it left behind a generous contribution to the prosperity of the people whom it had represented for so long to the inhabitants of the Levant.

<sup>1</sup> Playfair, p. 176. As an illustration of the cost of redemption, Sutton in 1714 purchased the freedom of seven British slaves for 1,200 dollars (between £250 and £300).

## XI

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPANY

THE framework of the Company's organization had been determined in the articles of incorporation granted by the crown, and it conformed to the pattern followed in the great majority of the commercial and colonial adventures chartered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the head was the governor, elected annually by a special general court of election, or meeting of all the freemen, normally held within the first fortnight of February. Re-election was permitted, and it was customary to continue the same man in office, so long as he gave satisfaction, until he died or expressed the desire to retire; but in the seventeenth century opposition was not unknown, and at least one governor (Sir Hugh Hammersley) was removed by an adverse vote (1635). The longest tenure of the office was that of Lord Delawar who held it for thirty years (1736-66). Some of the governors appear to have been ciphers. Thus Sir Thomas Lowe's words were said to be of little weight with the merchants,<sup>1</sup> and Sir Henry Garraway was allowed to retain his position for two years after he was 'cracked'.<sup>2</sup>

In early days the heads of the Company<sup>3</sup> were all prominent merchants who stood high among the mercantile aristocracy of London, and most of them achieved the mayoralty of the city. Sir Thomas Smith was governor of the East India Company; Sir Thomas Lowe presided over the Merchant Adventurers; Hammersley was head of the Muscovy Company—and the two last rose to be Lord Mayor of London.<sup>4</sup> But after the Restoration a change took place in the occupants of the governorship which can be dated from the election of George, Lord Berkeley in 1673. In place of the great merchants of the past the office was now bestowed on a group of men who, though connected with commerce in general or with the Company in particular, either personally or through their families, were also of high rank and political distinction. Lord Berkeley,

<sup>1</sup> Sanderson, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1641-3, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> For a list of the governors see Appendix IV.

<sup>4</sup> Lowe in 1604-5, Hammersley in 1628. Sir Henry Garraway, who was lord mayor in 1639-40, was governor of the East India Company, as was Sir Andrew Riccard (governor of the Levant Company, 1654-72). Garraway was also governor of the Russia Company until removed by order of the house of commons in June 1644.

who had married the daughter of an official in the East India Company, was prominent in that Company, as well as in the Royal African Company; his successor, Sir William Trumbull, had been ambassador at Constantinople; it seems probable that Sir Richard Onslow's family had connexions with the Levant Company;<sup>1</sup> and the Duke of Chandos was the son of Lord Chandos, who had represented the Company in Turkey 1680-7. In the eighteenth century rank and political influence became the predominant qualifications, and the later holders of the office had no trading interests to recommend them. As the social status of its occupants thus rose the governorship was slowly converted from an active executive position into a dignity largely honorary and titular. Its holders, at the end of the Company's life, were like the modern chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge: men whose social and political prestige might be of service to the Company, but who were remote from the everyday affairs of the merchants, and in no sense their real leaders. Such a powerful 'friend at court' could be counted upon to facilitate the Company's relations with the government, to ease the passage for a petition, or to smother adverse criticism; and in their last three governors, Lord North, the Duke of Leeds, and Lord Grenville, the Levant merchants were successful in securing the services of men who, both politically and socially, occupied the most eminent positions.

Below the governor there was a deputy-governor, a treasurer, a husband, a secretary, and eighteen assistants, all of whom were chosen annually at the February court of election, and were in practice generally certain of re-election so long as they were prepared to continue in office.<sup>2</sup> The deputy-governor was chosen from the ranks of the merchants, and as the governor withdrew from active control he replaced him as the chief executive official. William Hussey, the ambassador, was the only one of them to achieve any distinction outside of his commercial career. The husband kept the papers, bonds, and seals of the company, passed bills of entry for goods laded on ships, and in general presided over the routine administration of the trade. The assistants, together with the deputy-governor, formed a kind of permanent committee which met to decide the less important business and to hear, discuss, and

<sup>1</sup> A Richard Onslow was elected an assistant of the Company in 1671.

<sup>2</sup> A proposal to make the governor, deputy, treasurer, and husband eligible for office for two years only was made, but not passed, in Feb. 1681 (S.P. 105. 154, p. 244).

arrange more weighty matters before they were submitted to the general court.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these officers the merchants also elected each year a bookkeeper and collector to whom the impositions levied on members' goods were paid, a solicitor for necessary legal service, and a beadle. When the old restriction of the trade to freemen of London was removed in 1753, and the numbers of the Company began to expand at the close of the eighteenth century, collectors of dues had to be appointed in some of the outports. The first seems to have been at Dublin in 1780—a step made necessary by the recent liberation of Irish trade. For remuneration these collectors were allowed 2s. in the pound out of their receipts.<sup>2</sup>

All the chief officials were obliged on entering office to take an oath to fulfil their duties in obedience to the regulations of the Company; and in early days at least efforts were made to make service compulsory. Those who refused to serve as governor had to forfeit 100 nobles, as an assistant £10, as treasurer 20 marks;<sup>3</sup> and in 1624 a Mr. Mustard was fined £5 for refusing to act as husband. Assistants were allowed 2s. 6d. for attendance at each meeting, but they were fined for non-appearance or for arriving late.<sup>4</sup> In 1665 two of them were dismissed for absenting themselves.<sup>5</sup> In the seventeenth century it was customary to give the governor, deputy, and husband an annual gratuity, the amount of which was not at first fixed, although usually the governor received £100, the deputy 100 marks, and the husband £50. Sometimes the amount of the gift was increased as in 1643 when the governor was given £300; sometimes its character was changed as in 1656 when he received a piece of plate of 120 oz.,<sup>6</sup> and the rewards of the deputy and husband fluctuated proportionately. The use in the Company's books of such terms as 'fee' and 'usual stipend' in reference to these gratifications show that in time they came to be fixed and to be recognized as established perquisites. The court books of the Company for the eighteenth century have not survived, and it is therefore impossible to state upon what terms these officials then served, but it is only

<sup>1</sup> It was customary to appoint a small committee—usually of assistants—to audit the accounts at home, and those sent from Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 120, pp. 329, 348. In 1639 the Company had a collector of duties on currants at Bristol, but this is the only mention I have found of such an official in any of the outports before the close of the eighteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Harley MSS. 306, ff. 72-4.

<sup>4</sup> Harley MSS. 306, ff. 72-4. S.P. 105. 148, Feb. 3, 1623/4. The amount varied. It was 2s. 6d. in 1644, and 1s. in 1662. The money went into the poor-box.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Mar. 19, 1654/5.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 150, Feb. 2, 1642/3; S.P. 105. 151, Feb. 8, 1655/6.

reasonable to suppose that some similar system of remuneration continued. The secretary, bookkeeper, and beadle were paid fixed salaries in the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> How the treasurer was rewarded I have been unable to discover. The bookkeeper and collector was obliged to give securities to the value of £1,500 in order to safeguard the Company against fraud or defalcation; and though I have found no evidence of it, it is probable from the procedure adopted in the case of the bookkeeper and of the treasurers of the various factories, that the treasurer in England also had to provide similar sureties.

For the larger part of its existence the Company had no meeting place of its own. At first assemblies were held in the governor's house, but this proved to be an inconvenient arrangement when a governor was aged or incapable of regular attention, or in the interregnum created by a death. As early as 1623 there was talk of fixing a regular place of meeting, but it was not until 1644 that the East India Company's House and the Ironmongers' Hall were borrowed for the purpose. This only lasted for a brief time, and in the following year, 1645, the merchants were again assembling under the roof of their governor, Alderman Pennington. In 1651 they arranged to meet at the Fishmongers' Hall, and during the next twenty years they fluctuated between the Ironmongers' and the Fishmongers' Halls and the governor's house. From September 1672 they settled in the Ironmongers' Hall,<sup>2</sup> paying for the use of it £10 per annum which the Ironmongers devoted to the relief of their poor; but an attempt to raise this rent drove them to the Pewterers' Hall in 1695. For this they had to pay £16 per annum. There they remained until 1718 when they transferred themselves to the Salters' Hall near St. Swithin's Church, London Stone. They met here up to the year 1801, when they at last acquired premises of their own: 'The Levant Company's House', 14 Little St. Helen's, Bishopsgate Street. These were occupied from 1802-16 inclusive, but in 1817 the Company moved again to the South Sea House in Threadneedle Street, where it remained until its dissolution.<sup>3</sup>

Meetings took place frequently, though on no regular system.

<sup>1</sup> The secretary received £100 per annum; the bookkeeper £40 per annum—increased by 1701 to £80 per annum; the beadle £10 per annum in 1622 up to £40 per annum by 1701 (S.P. 105. 152, Feb. 10, 1662/3; S.P. 105. 148, Feb. 4, 1662/3; S.P. 105. 156, Sept. 18, 1701; S.P. 105. 156, Feb. 6, 1700/1.

<sup>2</sup> In Fenchurch Street.

<sup>3</sup> I have taken these facts from many scattered references in the court books of the Company and from Rider's *British Merlin*.



Normally the full or general court assembled every few weeks and the court of assistants met more regularly. In 1631 it was resolved that the latter should sit twice a week, but this regulation was not strictly followed.<sup>1</sup> Fines, which went to the poor, were imposed on members who came late, for unseemly language, and for not preserving silence.<sup>2</sup> All kinds of business were transacted at these assemblies: reports were heard of negotiations which had been carried on with the government; ships were chosen and the times of their sailing fixed; officials, ambassadors, consuls, and chaplains were elected; new freemen were admitted;<sup>3</sup> letters were read from representatives in the Levant and replies drawn up; regulations for the control of trade or the discipline of the factors were passed; impositions and levies were voted; complaints were heard from those who had returned from Turkey with grievances—in short, the whole organization of the Company and its trade passed beneath the review of these meetings and was decided by the votes of the majority.

For its finances the Company depended upon the rates or 'impositions' which it levied on its members at home, and on the consulage collected in the Levant ports.<sup>4</sup> Impositions had to be paid on all goods imported or exported. The rates fluctuated from time to time according to the needs of the Company, but the following represent a fair average. At the end of the seventeenth century, 5*s.* had to be paid on each cloth, ton of lead, barrel of tin, and every £10 worth of other goods exported.<sup>5</sup> On imports the figures fixed in 1671 were:

	£	s.	d.
On every bale of silk . . . .	3	0	0
„ „ sack of grogram . . . .	1	0	0
„ „ bale of cotton wool . . . .	1	5	0
„ „ sack of goat's wool . . . .	2	0	0
„ „ bale of carpets . . . .	3	0	0
„ „ chest of rhubarb . . . .	1	0	0 <sup>6</sup>

Out in Turkey consulage was collected on all imports and exports in order to meet the expenses of the factories. Normally it was at the rate of 2 per cent., but it was frequently altered according to the state of trade and the Company's finances. Between the

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 148, May 9, 1631.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 147, Apr. 28, 1615.

<sup>3</sup> Every freeman on admission took an oath to keep all the Company's regulations—and it was customary for new members to put a guinea in the poor-box (S.P. 105. 209, p. 44; S.P. 105. 120, p. 352).

<sup>4</sup> It had also the entrance fees of new members.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 155, p. 290.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 153, Nov. 21, 1671.

Restoration and the Revolution it was sometimes down to 1 per cent., while in the middle of the eighteenth century it had to be raised to 10 per cent. The treasurers of the respective factories had orders to remit any surplus cash to Constantinople from time to time, keeping only a small balance for working expenses, and the treasurer there sent it home if it had not to be disbursed in safeguarding or promoting the Company's interest at the Porte.

Except in very early days the Company did not own the ships which it used for its trade. When it was decided to resort to general shipping, tenders were invited from the masters and owners of vessels, and the required number were chosen and terms arranged for their freightage by the general court. Election was made by show of hands, or, in the event of a dispute, a balloting box was brought out into which each member put a ball.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the vessels offered were owned or part-owned by members of the Company, and in such cases the members concerned were forbidden to vote when choice was being made of the general ships.<sup>2</sup> The number of these ships required each year naturally varied; eight were employed in 1672 and again in 1675, six in 1678, eleven in 1696, and nine in 1698; but whenever tenders were called for, more vessels were offered than were required. Thus in June 1664, when one ship was needed for Scanderoon, six were presented; and again in March 1690 nine vessels were available, but only four were chosen, two for Smyrna and one each for Constantinople and Scanderoon. If it seemed likely that the general ships would not hold the cargoes awaiting export, what was called a 'lagg' ship was appointed to stand by and carry out the surplus.<sup>3</sup> In war time it was often necessary for the Company to pay double freight and to give demurrage after a stated time, in order to compensate owners for the increased risk of the journey and of delay in port. The ships thus hired varied in size from 250 to 600 tons and carried crews of from about 35 to 100 men each. The *Eagle*, 500 tons and 100 men,

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 150, May 15, 1645.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Feb. 11, 1642/3.

<sup>3</sup> The same ships were frequently re-employed by the Company, but I have found no trace in its papers of the interesting right of a 'permanent bottom', i.e. the right (which in time became so securely established as to be vendible) on the part of certain owners and masters to provide vessels for the Company's service. This practice, the development of which in the East India Company's trade has been fully described in Miss L. S. Sutherland's valuable monograph on William Braund (chap. iv), resulted in the growth of a small ring of owners monopolizing the right to tender ships for employment by the Company. It would no doubt have appeared in the case of the Levant Company if the use of general shipping had not been discontinued after 1744.

chosen for Scanderoon in 1664, or the *Hunter*, 230 tons and 48 men, dispatched to Smyrna in 1672, were typical examples of these vessels. The Company insisted that all vessels hired by it should be sound and adequately armed and manned. In 1664 it decreed that no ships of three decks of over 18 years old, or of two decks of over 15 years old, should be employed,<sup>1</sup> and another regulation of 1688 fixing crews at 15 men per 100 tons was raised in 1705 to 20 men per 100 tons in view of the war with France.<sup>2</sup> The number of guns and the amount of powder to be carried was also fixed, and it was stipulated that the gun-decks of the ships must be kept clear. The *Eagle* and the *Hunter* mentioned above had 33 guns and 20 guns respectively. Masters of the vessels employed were obliged to sign such articles as the Company deemed necessary for the security of its trade and to give it a bond of £500 for their due performance.<sup>3</sup> In the seventeenth century it was stated that the total number of sailors annually employed by the Company amounted to four or five thousand, and that in the port of London it found work for about three thousand porters, bargemen, lightermen, shipwrights, caulkers, and others.<sup>4</sup>

The last day for lading the general ships and the date of their departure from Gravesend were fixed by the general court, though obviously these decisions could not always be rigidly adhered to. Efforts were made from time to time to systematize the appointment and sailing of the vessels. The ideal arrangement seems to have been that the Scanderoon ships should be appointed before March 1 and sail before June 1, and the Smyrna and Constantinople ships be chosen a little later and leave before the end of July or August, but this scheme never appears to have been rigidly enforced, and in war time, as for example during the Dutch war of 1672-4, the vessels were dispatched in winter time in order to avoid attacks.<sup>5</sup>

The allotment of space on the ships was arranged by means of a book in which members could underwrite what proportion of tonnage they required for their adventures. Normally it was easy to satisfy all requirements for the outward journey, but the return cargoes needed more regulation, and in the seventeenth century it was customary to allot space for one ton of goods to be laded in

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 152, Mar. 21, 1663/4.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 114, p. 424; S.P. 105. 156, Sept. 6, 1705.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> *The Present State of England*, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 153, Feb. 17, 1672/3.

the Levant for England for each 14-16 woollen cloths sent out to Turkey: that is to say that cargo-space homewards was proportioned to the quality of woollen manufactures which the individual merchant had exported from England. The captains of the ships were also allowed to carry a stipulated quantity of goods in their own names.<sup>1</sup>

When the vessels were ready to sail, a request was sent to the admiralty for a naval convoy to escort the fleet of merchantmen in safety through the corsair-infested Mediterranean. The first mention of this practice which I have found was in September 1650 when the Company, having recently had three of its ships taken by the French in the Mediterranean, asked the council of state for a convoy for its general ships which were then ready to depart.<sup>2</sup> Probably the request was made under the act for the regulation of the officers of the navy and customs, January 1649, which contained a clause authorizing the conveying of merchant shipping. A year later a general 'act for settled convoys for securing the trade of this nation' was passed (October 31, 1650) and the practice was again confirmed in later acts of 1659 and 1660.<sup>3</sup> Friction with France and war with the Dutch and with Spain made the defence of English sea-borne traffic imperative during these troubled years, and after the Restoration the system of convoys was regularized by the new head of the Admiralty, James, Duke of York. In 1662 his secretary, William Coventry, told the Company that

'upon consideration of the late peace made by the Dutch with Algiers on terms of having their ships searched and of furnishing Algiers with naval provisions (whereby they are supposed to design an ingrossment of the whole trade of the Levant into their own hands,) his highness has resolved to secure English trade into those parts by convoys at such times as should be thought most proper by the Company, thereby to encourage strangers rather to use English ships so fortified than Flemish bottoms liable to searching.'<sup>4</sup>

In peace time these convoys were provided by third-rates or by frigates, but when there was war with Holland or France stronger

<sup>1</sup> The regulation of June 14, 1754 (S.P. 110. 68, p. 72) laid it down that a ship's master might carry out goods to the value of 50s. for every ton the ship was in burden, 40s. of this to be for his own account and 10s. for the account of the other officers on the vessel. He could bring back goods to the value of 20 dollars per ton, 16 dollars of which was to be for his own account and the remaining 4 dollars for his officers' account. <sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Sept. 13, 1650.

<sup>3</sup> *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, i, p. 1260; ii, pp. 444, 1282, 1411.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 152, May 5, 1662.

protection was, of course, needed. Those vessels which went to Scanderoon were in especial need of defence, for in addition to the dangers of the voyage the port itself was an open roadstead where no security could be obtained against the attacks of corsairs.<sup>1</sup> Normally, at least two ships of the royal navy went with each convoy, one escorting the Scanderoon squadron, the other proceeding to Smyrna with the rest of the fleet. The commanders of the convoying ships were given a gift by the Company—usually of 200 dollars—on the safe arrival of the merchantmen in the Turkish ports.

Vessels bound for the Levant frequently called at the Portuguese and Spanish ports to exchange a portion of their cargoes for a supply of Spanish dollars which were used to make up the adverse balance of sales and purchases in Turkey. Leghorn was a favourite halting-place, while farther east Crete and Cyprus were sometimes used as ports of call, and the island of Tenedos provided safe anchorage from storms for vessels bound for the Dardanelles and Constantinople.

Within two days of their arrival in port in Turkey, all captains of ships had to deliver to the ambassador or consul on their own and their pursers' oaths a true and perfect list of all goods carried, together with the names of those who had shipped them, where they were first laden, their marks and numbers, and the person's name to whom they were consigned. Before this had been done no one could remove any of the cargo under penalty of an extra duty of 20 per cent. Similar oaths had also to be made on the departure of any vessel.<sup>2</sup> It was then necessary to secure a 'release' from the Turkish customs officials. By the capitulations the rate of duty payable was fixed at 3 per cent., but as all goods were estimated at much below their real value the tax worked out at little more than 2 per cent. Once that was paid a *taskara* or quittance was given and the goods could then be moved to any part of the sultan's empire without further charge<sup>3</sup> except for the *misteria* duty. This seems, in its origin, to have been a tax imposed upon all the Frank merchants by Sultan Achmet I (1603-17) for the maintenance of a hospital at Constantinople,<sup>4</sup> and it was levied according either to the weight or measure of the goods imported into Turkey. Its rate had been a source of contention until Paget

<sup>1</sup> *The Case of the Levant Company* (1718).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 5; S.P. 105. 154, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Tott, ii, pp. 209-10.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Roberts, p. 196.

managed to fix it in 1693 at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on all commodities sold by weight,<sup>1</sup> at which figure it remained until Ainslie secured its removal in 1784. Moderate as these duties were there was a good deal of evasion, for unscrupulous factors were frequently able to run their goods aboard or on shore by night, or to bribe the Turkish officials with half of the money saved by dodging the customs.<sup>2</sup>

The disposal of the goods, once landed, presented several difficulties, for a good business in Turkey did not mean selling at a high price, but selling to some one who could pay.<sup>3</sup> This explains the repeated regulations of the Company ordering the factors to sell only for ready money and prohibiting 'trusting';<sup>4</sup> but in practice it proved impossible to enforce these orders. They were received with 'a very violent and contemptuous opposition' by some of the factors and evaded by selling cloth for money which was promptly loaned back to the buyer who gave a written obligation in terms of silk or other commodities to be delivered at some future date.<sup>5</sup> In this roundabout way sales continued to be made on credit.

The business done was purely wholesale and it was dominated by the Jews who then controlled most of the trade of the Levant. They farmed the taxes for the Turks, especially the customs, they were the bankers to whom the Franks had recourse when they had to borrow to pay an *avania*, and it was with the Jew middle-man, not with the Turkish customer, that the English merchant usually conducted his trade. When a new factor appeared in any of the ports he was immediately laid hold of by the first Jew that could secure him, and henceforth he was obliged to do business through that Jew, for by compact among themselves no other Jew would interpose or accept his commissions; so that as North put it,

'the merchant can no more shake off his Jew than his skin. He sticks like a bur and whether well used or ill used will be at every turn in with him and no remedy . . . and the merchant cannot be without a Jew nor change that he hath. . . . It is not a little convenience that is had by

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> D'Arvieux, i, pp. 55-6.

<sup>3</sup> Beaujour, p. 351.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. S.P. 105. 147, Oct. 9, 1612; S.P. 105. 153, Nov. 20, 1672; S.P. 105. 332, pp. 3, 4. All factors had to take an oath against 'trusting'.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105, 115, Company to Sutton, May 12, 1702; S.P. 105. 116, Company to Consul Pilkington, June 22, 1715. Motraye wrote of the oath against trusting that 'those factors seem to take another mental or secret one within themselves never to observe it'—the reason being that it was impossible to keep it and do any trade (i. p. 153). The oath was repealed at Constantinople in 1741 and at Smyrna and Aleppo in 1744.

these appropriated Jews; for they serve in the quality of universal brokers, as well for small as great things.'<sup>1</sup>

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in her letters confirms this account of the power of the Hebrew brokers,<sup>2</sup> which helps to explain the fears of monopoly expressed in England when it was proposed to admit the Jews to the freedom of the Company in 1744; and their power survived though they had in time to share it with the Greeks and Armenians. They received a brokerage of 1 per cent. on all goods and of  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. on money which they handled.

The factors who lived in the Levant consisted of the sons of free-men, or of gentlemen and cadets of noble families who were apprenticed to some member of the Company in London in order to learn the trade and make their fortunes. Strict regulations existed against the binding of apprentices abroad, and any such were prohibited from being employed as factors or from claiming the freedom of the Company when their indentures expired.<sup>3</sup> The premium demanded for apprenticeship rose considerably after the Restoration. John Verney paid £400 and Dudley North £350,<sup>4</sup> but by the reign of William III £500-£800 was the usual sum,<sup>5</sup> and Roger North states that £1,000 was sometimes asked.<sup>6</sup> It seems also to have been customary to require sureties for £1,000, presumably against fraud, before the young apprentices were sent abroad. The term of service was seven years, three of which were spent in London in order to become acquainted with their masters' business and the remaining four in the Levant. Then they received liberty to trade and were free to act as factors for the merchants in London. It was usual for them to work in partnerships, which prevented trouble for their principals in England if one of them happened to die. For their services they received a percentage or commission on all goods passing through their hands. Sanderson insisted on charging 4 per cent., though his employer protested and thought  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. sufficient. By 1701 the rate was 3 per cent.,<sup>7</sup> but in the middle of the eighteenth century it seems to have dropped to 2 per cent.<sup>8</sup> From at least as early as

<sup>1</sup> North, *Lives*, iii, pp. 53-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 264; S.P. 105. 333, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Verney Papers*, iii, p. 370. North, *Lives*, ii, p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> *H.M.C. House of Lords*, ii, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, p. 350. I have been unable to find any figures for the eighteenth century.

<sup>7</sup> Hatton, *Merchants Magazine*, p. 207.

<sup>8</sup> I have found references to 2 per cent. commission in 1739 and again in 1757.

1761 it again stood at 3 per cent.<sup>1</sup> In addition the factors made a good deal of profit from their own personal trading. There was a strong temptation to use their principals' money in this private trading and in early days efforts had been made to stop it, but they proved fruitless and the factors continued to trade for themselves 'with good profit and little loss provided that they are sensible men and careful of their interest and of their affairs'.<sup>2</sup> Speculation in 'futures' was a common practice, goods being bought on a cheap market while they were still on the way out from England in the hope that prices would rise; and the fluctuating *agio* or rate of exchange among the Levant currencies also offered profit to the shrewd or the lucky. Other paying activities were the buying and selling of jewels, and the lending of money to Turkish officials, especially if they had been appointed to govern a province and needed an adequate equipment. Such loans usually paid cent. per cent. interest, which was naturally wrung out of the wretched provincials.<sup>3</sup>

It was difficult for the Company to exercise any effective control over its trade in the Levant or over the factors who handled it. An annual fee was paid to an agent at Marseilles to forward letters overland, or—in the event of war with France—to a similar individual in Vienna, but the usual time required for an exchange of communications between any of the ports and home was five months, and even this could not be relied upon. In such circumstances much had to be trusted to the honesty and intelligence of the factors, and although the Commonwealth period proved that these were not always unshakeable, the abnormal conditions and the air of unrest which then prevailed are sufficient explanations of what was undoubtedly an exception to the general rule of obedience and probity. It is clear from contemporary accounts that there was some laxity and a certain amount of sharp practice at the expense either of the Company or of individual principals from time to time, but most of the evidence comes from the Commonwealth and Restoration period. Before and after that time the factors seem to have caused their employers little trouble. By its charters the Company had very extensive powers of punishment. It could fine and imprison and send home the refractory in custody;

<sup>1</sup> Three per cent. is mentioned in a letter from Aleppo to Messrs. John Townson & Co., June 2, 1761 (S.P. 110. 36), and repeatedly in later correspondence. On money the commission rate was 1 per cent.

<sup>2</sup> Wheler, i, pp. 236–7.

<sup>3</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, pp. 408–10; Hill, p. 7; Stowe MSS. 219, f. 249.



but for a century before its dissolution in 1825 no example occurred of the exercise of these powers.<sup>1</sup> Even in the seventeenth century, with the exception of the stormy period of the Protectorate, it was seldom necessary to do more than dismiss a recalcitrant official from his post or bring back a disobedient factor in disgrace.

The position of the ambassador has already been discussed. Below him stood the consuls and vice-consuls in the various ports where there were English factories or where English ships traded. All those in the larger centres like Aleppo, Smyrna, and Salonika were appointed by the Company in London; but the smaller vice-consulates, generally held by Levantines, as for example on the islands of the Archipelago, were filled by the ambassador, or (as at Chios) by the consul at Smyrna.<sup>2</sup> In these, and in some of the less important of the former, such as Cairo, Cyprus, and Tripoli,<sup>3</sup> the consuls received no salary and had to pay their own expenses, but they were allowed to retain for their own use the 2 per cent. consulage paid on goods belonging to members of the Company which passed through their ports. In return they acted as intermediaries with the Turkish port, custom, and other officials, and were, in general, expected to protect and facilitate the Company's trade.

Of the salaried posts Smyrna and Aleppo were the most important throughout the Company's history. When figures first become available the consul at Smyrna was being paid 500 dollars per annum (1611),<sup>4</sup> whereas the one at Aleppo was receiving 2,500 dollars per annum (1616)<sup>5</sup>—a discrepancy which is in itself sufficient proof of the greater importance of the latter factory in early days. In 1633 the pay at Smyrna was raised to 1,200 dollars per annum,<sup>6</sup> and in 1649, when the consul at Aleppo was getting 3,000 dollars per annum and his colleague at Smyrna still only 1,200 dollars per annum, it was decided to fix them both at 2,000 dollars per annum, showing that Smyrna had at length equalled its rival in importance.<sup>7</sup> In addition, from at least as early as the sixteen-thirties, both were given an annual gratuity of a 1,000 dollars and they were granted allowances, soon fixed at 500 dollars each way, for their travelling expenses to Turkey and back. On this basis they

<sup>1</sup> *Account of the Levant Company, &c.*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly Cyprus and Acre were at one time under the consul at Aleppo.

<sup>3</sup> In 1761 the Company agreed to pay the consul at Tripoli 500 dollars per annum in addition to the usual consulage collected by him (S.P. 105. 119, p. 97).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 147, Nov. 13, 1611. In the seventeenth century the dollar was worth about 5s.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1615/6.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 149, Dec. 18, 1633.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 105. 151, Oct. 26, 1649.

remained until, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the drop in the value of money and the greatly increased cost of living in the Levant compelled a revision of salaries. At Smyrna the consul was receiving 4,500 dollars per annum by 1795<sup>1</sup> and this was increased to 8,000 dollars in 1802 and to 12,000 dollars (£800) in 1813.<sup>2</sup> At Salonika the pay, which had only been 1,000 dollars per annum before 1813, had got up to 6,000 (£400) by 1821.<sup>3</sup> These appointments were better than those which prevailed in the French service and enabled the English consuls to make 'a greater appearance' than their rivals in all the ports where they dwelt side by side.<sup>4</sup>

All those elected to the office had to take an oath pledging themselves to good conduct during their tenure of it, and also to find sureties. At Smyrna and Aleppo these had become fixed by 1649 at £5,000, generally provided by ten friends standing for £500 each.<sup>5</sup> At Scanderoon £2,000 in bonds was demanded of the factor marine.<sup>6</sup> At first the consuls seem to have been allowed to trade for themselves, but as early as 1624 it was resolved that none of them should indulge in trade or act as a factor,<sup>7</sup> and this regulation remained in force throughout the rest of the Company's existence.<sup>8</sup> In 1701 Consul Hastings was actually recalled from Aleppo for trading contrary to his articles.<sup>9</sup> All appointments were made nominally for a term of years, usually 3-5, and there are a few instances of men being replaced or recalled because their term had expired.<sup>10</sup> The Company also retained the right to remove a man at any time for misconduct. Thus Purnell was recalled in 1726

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 122. Company to Robt. Wilkinson, Sept. 29, 1795.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Company to Werry, April 30, 1802; S.P. 105. 123. Company to Werry, July 7, 1813.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 134. Charnaud to Morier, Dec. 4, 1813; S.P. 105. 124. Company to Cartwright, Apr. 12, 1821.

<sup>4</sup> Beaujour, p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Sanderson, p. 167; S.P. 105. 151, Oct. 30, 1649; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1667-8, p. 336. Edmund Barnard, who was appointed consul at Smyrna, August 1635, had only to give securities to the value of £1,000. See his articles of agreement with the Company in S.P. 105. 143.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 118, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. 105. 148, Jan. 8, 1623/4.

<sup>8</sup> From the comparative smallness of the salaries paid and from the competition for the posts, it seems probable that the consuls must have had some perquisites to augment their incomes, but I am unable to throw any light on this point.

<sup>9</sup> S.P. 105. 115. Company to Paget, Feb. 27, 1700/1.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Kirkham was appointed at Aleppo in 1621 in place of Chapman, whose term had expired (S.P. 105. 110. Company to Kirkham, 1621 [no other date given]). H. Pretty was recalled from Cyprus, 1722, because his term had come to an end (S.P. 105. 116. Company to Pretty, Dec. 13, 1722).

and Kinloch dismissed in 1766 from the Aleppo consulate.<sup>1</sup> But these were exceptions to the general rule of permanency. Usually it was death or resignation which vacated the office and tenures of twenty or thirty years were quite common. In the event of an interregnum due to death, absence, or any other cause the ambassador or the Company sometimes appointed a temporary deputy consul, and sometimes the office was put into commission, five factors exercising the powers belonging to it.

The consuls were the leaders and representatives of the factories in every aspect of their life. They executed the ordinances and decrees of the Company and suppressed abuses such as the importation of false money, the over-charging of principals by their factors, and breaches of the 'trusting' oath. They forced ship-masters and merchants to take the oath of true entries for all goods brought into the port, and to respect the laws concerning navigation and the behaviour of vessels in the harbour. They were responsible for the maintenance of good order among their countrymen, and for the decision of all disputes between them. They were also ordered to take possession of the books and papers of any Englishman who died and see that his estate went to the rightful heirs; and, further, to try to reclaim any factors who were licentious or, if incorrigible, to report them to the Company at home. When it became necessary to levy any duties on the merchants, spend any of the Company's money, or transact other business of importance, they summoned a general meeting of the factory. This met at the consul's discretion or when two or more factors demanded; and it was attended by all who were free of the Company or who were the sons or apprentices of freemen. The consul and three factors were necessary for a quorum, and decisions were made by a majority, the consul only voting in the event of a tie.<sup>2</sup> Those present had to take an oath of secrecy not to divulge what passed. Occasionally there was trouble with the factors who—because they had squabbled with the consul or out of sheer laziness—refused to attend these meetings when summoned.<sup>3</sup>

In the inner affairs of the factories the consuls were thus the representatives of the Company's authority, as well as judges, pro-

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 116. Company to Stanyan, Nov. 2, 1726; S.P. 105. 119. Company to Kinloch, July 1, 1766.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 13; S.P. 105. 117. Company to the Aleppo Factory, July 8, 1740.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. S.P. 105. 115. Company to the factory at Smyrna, Aug. 10, 1703; S.P. 105. 117. Company to Consul Coxe, Aleppo, Dec. 15, 1732.

tectors, and guides, exercising control over all their affairs. From an external point of view their functions were still more important, for they were responsible for the maintenance of all the privileges granted by the grand signior in the capitulations and for the protection of the factors against the insolence and oppressions of the Turks. They were constantly in negotiation with the pasha and other local authorities to avoid *avarias*, to secure redress for insults offered to any of the merchants, or to win new facilities for trade. They were also the social head of their flock. They entertained all travellers, invariably winning high praise for their generous welcome, they celebrated national fêtes, and they exchanged hospitalities with the other foreign consuls and local notabilities. In Smyrna they maintained considerable state, appearing in public always with a retinue of interpreters, janissaries, merchants, and servants in livery, and even the Turks respected their dignity by clearing the streets as they passed through to have audience with the pasha or chief magistrate in the district.<sup>1</sup>

In the administration of the large factories there were two other important officials—the treasurer and the chancellor. At Constantinople and Aleppo treasurers existed from the opening days of the Company, but it was not until 1635 that the growing importance of Smyrna called for the appointment of one there.<sup>2</sup> Like all the Company's officials they were prohibited early in the seventeenth century from trading during their tenure of office, which came in time to be fixed at two years, though reappointments were common. All were expected before taking office to swear an oath that they would collect all duties without favour and fraud, present accounts when called for, and use the utmost frugality in all disbursements.<sup>3</sup> From 1658 onwards no one could serve as treasurer who had not resided in the factory for at least five years.<sup>4</sup> At first they were remunerated entirely on a commission basis,<sup>5</sup> but this was soon transformed into an annual salary. These were fixed at 500 dollars at Constantinople, 200 dollars—rising later to 300 and then to 400—at Aleppo, and 250 dollars at Smyrna; but by 1699

<sup>1</sup> Dumont, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 149, July 8, 1635.

<sup>3</sup> The treasurer's oath is given in full in S.P. 105. 332, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 333, p. 17; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1658–9, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Sanderson, who was treasurer at Constantinople, was allowed 5 in the 1,000 on all cash collected by him (Stevens, pp. 273–5). In 1650 the treasurer at Smyrna got 2 per cent. on the consulage he received (S.P. 105. 151, Dec. 19, 1650).

they had all been equalized at 400 dollars.<sup>1</sup> On this basis they remained at least as late as 1790. Then they began to rise, and by 1824 the treasurer at Smyrna was drawing 3,000 dollars per annum and 3½ per cent. on the consulage which he collected.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the larger consulates sureties to the value of £2,000 had to be given; but in the smaller ones, as at Cyprus, only £500 was required.<sup>3</sup> The treasurers were primarily responsible for collecting all the duties due to the Company, and upon notice from the ambassador or consul they provided the money required for the payment of *avantias*, gifts, bribes, or other expenditure of a 'national' character. They also paid the wages of all the Company's servants in the factory. Any balance which they held was forwarded at regular intervals to the treasurer at Constantinople, and they were ordered to make up their books every three or six months. These accounts were audited by four persons chosen by the assembly of the factory, one of whom must have been a factor in the place for at least five years, and they were then forwarded to London where they were still liable to exception by the Company.<sup>4</sup> It was also the treasurer's duty to obtain from the factors signed accounts of all goods consigned to or received by them and to give a receipt. These were also sent home periodically to be checked.<sup>5</sup>

The chancellor recorded and preserved all the official business of the factory. He kept a register of the deliberations of the assembly of the merchants and of all regulations received from the Company and decrees made by the consul. He registered all acts, contracts, and wills made by the factors, as well as the reports of ships arriving and departing; he received the effects of deceased members of the nation and of bankrupts; and he also examined and noted all goods arriving which were short either in weight or measure as a security for the factor to whom they were consigned. He was not permitted to trade for himself.<sup>6</sup> The office existed from very early days,<sup>7</sup> and was an important one, though the pay attached

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 112, p. 160; S.P. 105. 148, Aug. 10, 1622; S.P. 105. 114, p. 224; S.P. 105. 149, July 8, 1635; S.P. 105. 155, Apr. 19, 1699. Here, as in the case of the consuls, it seems certain that there must have been additional channels of remuneration to make the office worth while to the holder. Possibly they retained a percentage of their takings in addition to their salary.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 142. Ed. Hanson to G. Liddell, Aug. 17, 1824.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 105. 149, July 8, 1635; S.P. 105. 154, p. 442; S.P. 105. 155, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 140; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1661-8, p. 577.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1659-60, p. 432.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 333, pp. 19-20.

<sup>7</sup> There was a chancellor at Aleppo at least as early as 1596 (Sanderson, p. 151, note 2).

to it was meagre. At Smyrna it was 400 dollars per annum by 1746, but at Aleppo only 200 dollars was then being paid; and securities of £300 were required.<sup>1</sup> At Constantinople the position was of greater responsibility, for its holder combined the two offices of chancellor and secretary to the embassy; and as such he ranked as the second person in the factory and was accustomed to act as deputy or chargé d'affaires when the ambassador was absent or ill or in the interval between the death of one ambassador and the arrival of his successor. When Harbord died at Belgrade in 1692 Thomas Coke, the chancellor, controlled English affairs with vigour and promptitude for several months until Paget reached Adrianople, and Stanhope Aspinwall presided at Constantinople between the return of Fawkenor in 1742 and Porter's arrival in 1747. It was thus a position which required a person of ability and trust, and both Paget and Stanyan suggested that the king should appoint to the office, or at least give its holder a royal commission, in view of the possibility of state affairs coming under his control;<sup>2</sup> but no notice was taken of the proposal, and the chancellor at Constantinople continued to be chosen by the general court of the Company. At first they seem to have had no salary from the Company: at least Glover, who acted as Lello's secretary, received nothing until the factory at Constantinople decided in 1601 to vote him 200 chequins per annum out of the Company's funds.<sup>3</sup> In 1656 the pay was 400 dollars, and by 1673 it had got up to 600 dollars, at which figure it remained for a long time; but by 1790 it had been raised to 800 dollars.<sup>4</sup>

English chaplains were introduced into the Levant at an early date. There was one at Aleppo in 1599 who had had a predecessor;<sup>5</sup> and in the same year the Rev. William Biddulph was at Constantinople.<sup>6</sup> But it was not until 1635 that the factory at Smyrna became sufficiently important to need a chaplain, and Mr. Curtis of Sidney College, Cambridge, who was then appointed, did not reach his post until the following year.<sup>7</sup> These chaplains were at first paid 200 dollars (£50) per annum and given a free passage out, as well

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 118, p. 22; S.P. 105. 117. Company to the Aleppo Factory, Mar. 24, 1740.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 20. Paget to Vernon, Dec. 24, 1694; S.P. 97. 24. Stanyan to Carteret, Nov. 17, 1723.

<sup>3</sup> Sanderson, pp. 219-20. This was still being paid in 1611 (S.P. 105. 147, Nov. 6, 1611).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 112, p. 160; S.P. 105. 153, Dec. 4, 1673; S.P. 105. 121, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> Stevens, p. 275.

<sup>6</sup> Sanderson, pp. 175-6.

<sup>7</sup> Pearson, p. 60.

as a grant—usually of £20—towards the expenses of their equipment; but owing to the fall in the value of money in the Levant the salary was raised after 1654 to 400 dollars, the increase being given in the form of an annual gratuity of 200 dollars.<sup>1</sup> In 1724 their pay was further augmented to 500 dollars per annum and seventy years later (in 1794) it was decided to put up the chaplain's pay at Constantinople to 1,000 dollars per annum, and at Smyrna to 700 dollars per annum. By 1817-18 both of them were receiving £250 per annum.<sup>2</sup> In all the three factories the chaplains resided with the ambassador or consuls, and at Smyrna and Aleppo the consuls received an additional allowance from the Company for their board and diet. In 1782 the Smyrna chaplain was given 400 dollars per annum in lieu of his keep and ceased to be a member of the consul's household.<sup>3</sup> The later equality of his salary with that of his colleague at Constantinople when both were receiving £250 per annum thus concealed a vital difference, for the latter, in addition to his pay, continued to enjoy board and lodging with the ambassador.

The chaplains were elected in the general court of the Company after the candidates—of whom there were sometimes several—had preached before the assembled body of merchants; and the one elected had his sermon printed at the Company's expense. Constantinople was somewhat of an exception to this method of election because the minister there was also the private chaplain to the ambassador, and his nomination to the post was generally accepted by the Company, though it always reserved—and sometimes exercised—the right to choose freely.<sup>4</sup> Many of those who held these chaplaincies were men of exceptional ability and interest who afterwards rose to high preferment in the church or acquired far-flung reputations for their scholastic attainments.<sup>5</sup> Some were led to

<sup>1</sup> Pearson, pp. 51, 56-63; S.P. 105. 152, April 30, 1666.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 225; S.P. 105. 121, pp. 489, 504; S.P. 105. 136. Rev. J. G. Wrench to treasurer of Company, May 5, 1817; *ibid.*, Rev. C. Williamson to deputy-governor of Company, Nov. 27, 1818.

<sup>3</sup> Frampton, pp. 24, 37; Pearson, p. 56; S.P. 105. 121, p. 39. In the seventeenth century these chaplains—like their brethren who served under the East India Co.—augmented their stipends by engaging in trade (Wheler, i, p. 237, and Lipson, ii, p. 304).

<sup>4</sup> Pearson, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Charles Robson (1598-1638), chaplain at Aleppo 1624-30, whose collection of oriental MSS. is now in the Bodleian; Edward Pococke (1604-91), chaplain at Aleppo 1630-6 and at Constantinople 1637-40, subsequently professor of Arabic and later of Hebrew at Oxford. His rich collection of Arabic, Hebrew, and other eastern MSS. is also in the Bodleian; Robert Huntingdon (1637-1701), chaplain at Aleppo 1671-81, and later Bishop of Raphoe, brought back MSS.

accept the position for the adventure and experience of life among the Turks; others wished to study the eastern churches; others were attracted by the opportunity of visiting the holy places; and still more went out under the impulse of that great interest in the classical world and its antiquities which animated successive generations bred up in the culture of Greece and Rome.

Services were held in the consular chapel. In Aleppo this was compulsory because the Turks would not permit the erection of any Christian church outside of Constantinople and Smyrna, but in these two cities the English would not go to the expense and trouble of erecting a separate place of worship as the French had done.<sup>1</sup> Paget, however, built in his palace 'a pretty chappel, almost after the model of that at Windsor'.<sup>2</sup> In the smaller factories no provision for public worship existed and the merchants seem to have been negligent about their spiritual welfare. Writing of the factory at Zante, Wheler said of its members that they

'have left few marks of their religion in their life or in their death, as well as in some places where they trade, to the great dishonour of the reformed religion, having no one to console their spirits either by the preaching of the Word, nor by the administration of the sacraments during health, nor even in the last extremities of their illness nor at death. For they have neither church, nor chapel, nor pastor, so that it seems to the people of this country that they live without religion and die without hope; which is a great scandal to their neighbours and exposes our church to much contempt. You will not see a single merchant of the Roman faith who has not at his house one or more priests. On the contrary, ours do not want one, although they are rich, opulent, and able to maintain several.'<sup>3</sup>

Where there was a chaplain his reception depended on his character. The factors were mostly young men of high spirits, and no chaplain who tried to treat them as 'a parcel of rude irreligious boys' was accorded anything but scorn and derision; but they revered 'a venerable and prudent good man', would take admonition or advice from him 'if it be respectfully delivered' and heaped gifts on him which frequently exceeded his salary in value.<sup>4</sup>

which went after his death to the Bodleian and to Merton College; John Covel (1638-1722), chaplain at Constantinople 1670-7, and later Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, made an intensive study of the Greek Church; while Henry Maundrell (1665-1701), chaplain at Aleppo 1696-1701, and James Dallaway (1763-1834), chaplain at Constantinople 1794-7, both published valuable works, the former of his travels to Jerusalem and the latter descriptive of Constantinople and its history.

<sup>1</sup> Wheler, i, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Motraye, i, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> Wheler, i, pp. 61-2.

<sup>4</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, pp. 355-6; Wheler, i, p. 237.



Apart from the resident doctors who were established in the largest factories, the only other English living in the Levant were wives and children or servants taken out by the ambassadors—or less frequently by the consuls. Most of the ambassadors, from Glover's time onwards, were accompanied by their wives, but they appear to have been the only English women to live in Turkey before the close of the eighteenth century. The factors were either bachelors, or else formed alliances with women of the country. A large retinue of servants and grooms was needed to staff the embassy and the consular establishments to enable their occupants to conform to all the rigid system of pomp and ceremony by which the various foreign ministers sought to preserve their dignity before the Turks and against each other. But most of these were Greeks and Armenians hired for the occasion and fitted with liveries. Those English servants who were taken out seem to have proved very unsatisfactory. Kinnoull tried the experiment, but confessed that the maids who were 'to clean my house and wash my linen' soon turned so idle that he had to send them home again—while of the twenty men who accompanied him, he did not expect two would be left in six months' time, for 'the heat of the country and the wine ruins them; they are either drunk or sick in bed'.<sup>1</sup>

The native staff of the embassy or consulate comprised dragomen, janissaries, and sometimes a Turkish effendi and chous. The dragomen, or interpreters, were the intermediaries employed in all everyday negotiations with the Turkish ministers and officials, for only on occasions of formal ceremony, or when business of the utmost gravity required did the ambassador and consuls claim a personal audience. Difficulties of language alone prevented any close contact, and normally it was the dragomen who conveyed messages and served as the channel of communication. They were also expected to act as intelligence agents and to discover the hidden intrigues both of the Porte and of the other European representatives. They were, in short, the eyes, ears, and mouth of their employer; and in none of these capacities were they very satisfactory. Italian was used as the *lingua franca* throughout the Levant, and the dragomen were nearly all Levantines of Italian extraction. Being thus subjects of the sultan they were liable, in spite of their barats or patents of protection, to summary punishment at the hands of an infuriated minister or pasha, so that frequently they

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 26. Kinnoull to Newcastle, July 24, 1730. Rycout advised Trumbull not to take many English servants out (*H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 224).

dared not deliver a message which happened to be disagreeable to the receiver until by paraphrases and evasions of their own the sense was so 'minced and tempered' as to take all the vigour out of it. At least one French dragoman was impaled and another hanged in the seventeenth century by an exasperated Turk, and a sound drubbing on the soles of the feet was a common punishment meted out by offended grandees, who were 'ever proud, haughty, and arrogant in all their expressions and ways of treaty'. As a consequence the dragomen were very reluctant to convey a strong communication, and sometimes, as for example when two of the ambassadors were bombarding the Porte with protests against each other and demands for redress, the dragomen would privately concert together what they should say to the Turks and to their employers, altering their messages, and in some cases stifling them altogether.<sup>1</sup> 'Woe be to the consul who does not understand the language of the country,' wrote Beaujour. 'The dragomen surround him with so many wiles, they circumvent him with so many intrigues that that consul finds himself, as it were, a stranger to his own duties.'<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a dragoman who served one master might transfer his services to another, or even at the same time be employed in a similar capacity by the Porte, so that secrecy and fidelity became almost impossible. The ambassadors frequently complained of them. Trumbull said that his were 'the worst of any employed in the place'; Paget described those who served him as 'the dullest souls I ever met with', while Sutton condemned them for being incapable and, because of their catholic faith, addicted to French interests.<sup>3</sup>

Yet no real effort was made to remedy the flagrant abuses of this system or to imitate the successful experiment of the French who in 1670 began to send out boys to the convents of the Capuchins at Constantinople and Smyrna to be brought up with a knowledge of Turkish so that they might act as interpreters.<sup>4</sup> At the close of

<sup>1</sup> Knolles, ii. Continuation by Rycaut, p. 20; Larpent, i, pp. 299-300; Abbott, *Under the Turk*, &c., pp. 46-50. Rycaut said the position required 'men of learning, courage, and courtship. Their studies ought to endue them perfectly with the Turkish, Greek, and Arabic languages, with some knowledge also of the Persian, and with good elocution and readiness of tongue'.

<sup>2</sup> Beaujour, p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 390; S.P. 97. 21. Sutton to Nottingham, Sept. 8, 1702.

<sup>4</sup> G. B. Depping, *Documents Inédits sur l'Hist. de France*, ii, p. 49; Postlethwayt, ii, p. 63. I have found only one isolated reference to an Englishman acting as a dragoman in the seventeenth century. In 1647 a Mr. George Vernon was appointed interpreter at Constantinople (S.P. 105. 150, Feb. 1, 1646/7).

the seventeenth century a few Greeks were brought to England at the Levant Company's expense and sent to Gloucester College, Oxford, to learn English with a view to employing them as dragomen on their return; but apparently the scheme was not successful, for when it was proposed to send another lot over in 1704 Sutton was told by the Company that 'those who have already been there [i.e. Oxford] do not give us encouragement enough to make any further tryal of that kind, having no prospect of advantage, but the experience of a great deal of trouble and charge over them, for which reason we are resolved to have nothing more to do with them'.<sup>1</sup> The lot, and consequently the reliability, of the dragoman improved as the truculence of the Turks was tamed and they began to acquire a veneer of European habits, but in 1814 the ambassador, Robert Liston, was still urging that English boys should be sent out to be taught the duties of interpreter.<sup>2</sup> There is no trace of any step in this direction for another ten years, but in 1824, at the end of the Company's life, a Mr. R. Wood was appointed to be trained as a dragoman.

At Constantinople there were four dragomen<sup>3</sup> and in the later days of the Company four *giovanni di lingua* or students. At Aleppo three were employed until 1722 when they were reduced to two in number.<sup>4</sup> Smyrna had two in the seventeenth century and four by 1793.<sup>5</sup> In 1650 a first dragoman was paid 300 dollars per annum, a second dragoman 250 dollars, and others 200 dollars; but these, like all the other salaries paid by the Company, had to be augmented to meet the changing values of money in Turkey. At the close of the eighteenth century the first dragoman at Constantinople was receiving 1,800 dollars per annum and 1,500 at Smyrna.<sup>6</sup> By the capitulations the interpreters were given permission to wear certain distinctive clothes, including yellow shoes; an important concession in a land where meticulous sumptuary laws were strictly enforced. Winchilsea wrote home that if they ventured to appear in public without their yellow shoes 'the boys in the streets throw dirt in their faces' and they dared not appear at an audience.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 105. 115. Company to Sutton, July 6, 1704.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 105. 134. Liston to the Company, Nov. 25, 1814. Lane Poole (*Stratford Canning*, i, p. 136) says it was owing to Canning's representations that Englishmen were employed as student interpreters, but I have found no evidence of this before 1824.

<sup>3</sup> From at least as early as 1650 (S.P. 105. 151, Dec. 19, 1650).

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 105. 209, p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 105. 112, p. 160; S.P. 105. 121, p. 450.

<sup>6</sup> S.P. 105. 121, pp. 292, 450.

<sup>7</sup> *H.M.C. Finch*, i, p. 422.

The ambassador and consuls were empowered by the capitulations to employ janissaries to act as their guard, and they never went out unless accompanied by them.<sup>1</sup> This escort was necessary to prevent them from being insulted in the streets by fanatical Moslems who made a pious practice of contemptuously elbowing all 'Giaours', spitting on them or hurling opprobrious epithets after them without respect for person or rank. These janissaries were popularly known as 'swine-herds' because of their occupation,<sup>2</sup> but they seem to have proved themselves faithful servants. Kinnoull at least found them 'the trustiest fellows in the world'.<sup>3</sup> At Constantinople in the seventeenth century a Turkish effendi or priest was employed 'who was to attend every day for the purpose of Turkish writing, especially letters which must be done with a formal address according to the quality and condition of the persons wrote to';<sup>4</sup> while at Aleppo a chous, or messenger, was also employed who on ceremonial occasions walked before the consul carrying a staff tipped with silver.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Aleppo two were employed. They carried long staffs, and walked before the consul, striking the pavement as they went to warn people to give place (Russell, ii, p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Eton, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> S.P. 97. 27. Kinnoull to Newcastle, Oct. 12, 1734.

<sup>4</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, p. 374.

<sup>5</sup> Bod. Pamphlets. Folio 665, f. 188; Russell, ii, p. 3.

## XII

### LIFE IN THE LEVANT FACTORIES

BEHIND the commercial machinery and its history lay the human instruments through which alone it could operate and prosper. To the statesman and the merchant at home the Turkey trade was an impersonal concern of customs receipts and balance sheets, something which might be made to contribute to the material welfare of the nation or to the individual pocket; but to successive generations of factors it meant long years of exile among a semi-barbarous, truculent people, and no history of the Levant Company would be complete without some attempt to describe the conditions under which these small scattered groups of Englishmen lived in the sultan's empire. Picturesque in its outward trappings, it was none the less a solitary and a dangerous life, and the fruits of trade were reaped only at the cost of rare fortitude and prolonged sacrifice.

Service in Turkey meant an almost complete severance of home ties, for communication with England was a long and uncertain process. With favourable weather a ship could reach Scanderoon from the Downs in forty-two days,<sup>1</sup> but the usual time required for an exchange of letters between the factories and home was four to five months, and even this could not be relied upon. Vessels carrying mails were frequently taken or sunk by corsairs, letters were interrupted by marauders or lost in time of plague when the factors fled from a stricken city, and it was no unusual thing for a merchant to be several years without any news from his relatives and friends. In the summer of 1667 John Verney at Aleppo had been two and a half years without hearing from home, and from August, 1668 to November, 1671 no letters reached him from his father.<sup>2</sup> In 1691 Nathaniel Harley, who was also at Aleppo, had received no news from England for twelve months, while five years later a letter from his brother was the only one he had had for three years.<sup>3</sup> And behind this ignorance whether those nearest and dearest to them were well or ill, alive or dead, must also have lurked that nostalgia which assails most men who are severed for long periods from old familiar scenes and wonted

<sup>1</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Verney, *Memoirs*, iv, pp. 153, 159.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, pp. 243-6.

habits. With the characteristic reserve of their race they said little of it in their letters, but occasionally the longing broke out in some simple wish of future joy when 'we meet again once more in old England and pass our time over a good piece of roast beef and bowl of burnt punch'.<sup>1</sup>

The relations of the factors to the people among whom they lived were almost entirely restricted to purely official business, such as their transactions with the Turkish customs authorities, their appearance in the native courts, and to occasions of ceremony and courtesy. The contending pride of the two peoples, their differences in religion and in almost every detail of social life, above all the inequality of their positions rendered any closer association impossible. Among the Turkish governing classes a natural attitude of arrogance was further strengthened by the contempt which all strict Moslems professed for the Giaour, and the factors were made to feel that their presence in the sultan's dominions rested only upon a contemptuous sufferance. 'The meanest Moham-medan,' Pococke declared, 'thinks himself above any Christian,' and even among men of dignity and rank *dumus* (hog) became the usual appellation of the Franks.<sup>2</sup> 'Do not I know you,' broke out the grand vizier to the French ambassador in 1666, 'that you are a Giaour, that you are a hogge, a dogge, a turde eater;'<sup>3</sup> and when Vergennes announced the epoch-making alliance between France and Austria in 1756 he was curtly told that the Sublime Porte did not trouble itself about the union of one hog with another.<sup>4</sup>

In the seventeenth century, before defeat and disaster had tamed Turkish arrogance, this attitude of scornful tolerance reached its height, and even the ambassadors were not exempt from their share of contumely. Audience with the sultan was one long ignominy from the time when the ambassador was made to await the vizier's pleasure sitting on a bench in the courtyard of the Seraglio to the moment when he was introduced to the grand signior as 'the naked and hungry barbarian' who had ventured 'to rub his brow upon the Sublime Porte';<sup>5</sup> and far from being treated

<sup>1</sup> A factor at Aleppo to Mr. John Yarnton, London, Mar. 15, 1769 (in S.P. 110. 39).

<sup>2</sup> Larpent, i, p. 228. Pera, where the Franks lived, was popularly known as the pig quarter (Broughton, ii, p. 213).

<sup>3</sup> H.M.C. Finch, i, p. 406.

<sup>4</sup> Eton, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> This was stopped by Mahmoud II. When Stratford Canning went back to Constantinople in 1832 he was surprised to find the old humiliating etiquette abolished. The guards presented arms and the sultan held a friendly conversation with him (Lane Poole, ii, p. 504).

as the representative of a fellow monarch he was apt to be regarded as a hostage given for peace and for the good behaviour of his nationals in Turkey. 'You and all other ambassadors,' explained the grand vizier Kara Mustafa to Sir John Finch, 'are sent hither by your respective princes to answer for the lives and estates of all Mussulmans all over the world that are endamaged or suffer by your respective subjects, and you are here a hostage to answer for all damage done by Englishmen all over the world.'<sup>1</sup> The enforcement of this comprehensive liability naturally varied according to the personal character of the vizier and the prosperity of Turkish affairs, but it was always a menace which hung over the ambassador, and in time of war it became a stern reality, for the usual method of signifying the outbreak of hostilities was to fling the representative of the opposing power into the Prison of the Seven Towers—a grim pile of noisome dungeons where starvation and disease usually completed any work which had escaped the executioner's hands.<sup>2</sup> So little were the functions of an ambassador understood by the Turks that one of the grand viziers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, regarding them merely as civil spies, advised the divan to confine them all on Princes Island, as lepers or other infectious and unclean persons were isolated.<sup>3</sup> Lesser illustrations of the same attitude were of common occurrence. Thus in 1708 the grand vizier unceremoniously turned the Dutch ambassador out of a house on the Bosphorus which he needed for some of his women, and when Colyer protested the Turk merely threatened to throw his furniture into the sea.<sup>4</sup> In 1715, because of the suspicion that Genoa was helping Venice with ships and men in her war against Turkey, the Genoese ambassador was seized without a moment's notice, while he was in his garden undressed, and was hurried on board ship without even being allowed time to clothe himself properly, and sent back to Italy.<sup>5</sup> The English ambassadors suffered from such treatment much less than most of their colleagues and none of them was ever imprisoned by the

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Under the Turk*, &c., p. 303; Knolles, ii, *Maxims of Turkish Polity*, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> The last ambassador to be imprisoned in this way was the French, after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. Stratford Canning described his sensations on seeing the dungeon in the Seven Towers once occupied by a Russian ambassador: 'I whistled and tried to look brave; but at the same time I felt a something which quickened my steps towards the door' (Lane Poole, i, p. 72).

<sup>3</sup> Larpent, i, p. 284; Eton, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondance du Marquis de Ferriol*, p. 313.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 23. Sutton to 'Sir' (Stanhope), Nov. 22, 1715.

Turks or called upon to endure anything worse than hard words and financial extortion. Circumstances saved them from being embroiled with the Porte over political matters; they displayed more circumspection in their dealings with their hosts and more moderation in their claims than the French ambassadors for example; fear of English seapower may have helped to heighten Turkish respect; and it is probably a reasonable conclusion from the whole story of their relationships that there was in the characters of the two peoples something more congenial and attractive than existed between the Turks and most other Europeans. From Sir John Finch's time onward the English ambassadors had little cause to complain of their treatment at Constantinople, and some of them, like Paget and Sutton, undoubtedly possessed as much of the confidence of the Turks as it was possible for an infidel to win.

It was in the lucrative habit of squeezing the Franks financially that the Turkish officials most frequently demonstrated their arrogance. It was an axiom with them that the European merchants would endure almost anything short of death rather than surrender the rich gains they secured in the Turkish dominions, and the belief encouraged spoilation.

'The pashas and governors who lived at a distance from the Port,' wrote Sir Paul Rycaut after a long experience of life in the Levant, 'would tell the merchants that in case their estates were seized and one of their hands cut off, and expelled the country; yet so wedded were they to their own interests, and to the delights of the Turkish air, that the next year they would return again, and adventure the like treatment rather than forego the hopes and sweetness of that profit which they had tried and expected in the dominions of the grand seignior.'<sup>1</sup>

Hence, *avantias*, often on the most frivolous pretences, became a regular source of income to the local officials. In theory the merchants were adequately protected against such injustice by their capitulations which, on paper, combined guarantees for security with an unusual degree of independence. But they rested only on the generosity of the sultan, and, in practice, their observation was governed by the discretion, and even more by the weakness of

<sup>1</sup> Rycaut, *Hist. of the Turks*, p. 7. On another occasion when the English ambassador protested to the grand vizier against the beating by a Turk of the English interpreter at Smyrna, pointing out that such treatment might have a bad effect on trade, the vizier replied that the Porte had no need of English commerce, and even if some merchants went others would come, for the English would never leave altogether (von Hammer, xiii, pp. 290-1).



the Turkish government. If the grand vizier was avaricious or truculent the merchants were plundered and abused in spite of all the prohibitions of the capitulations; and the minor officials throughout the empire readily danced to the tune played at Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> To resist was only to court further extortion or imprisonment, and to protest was impossible since the vizier controlled the whole machinery of government and the reigning sultan was usually a shadowy, inaccessible figure for ever hunting in the environs of Adrianople or lost in the pleasures of the Seraglio. In the more remote provinces protection against oppression and rapacity was, under such a régime, almost impossible to obtain, and the wretched Franks had seldom any choice but to forestall all demands by a timely bribe. Even when the capitulations were rigorously observed at the centre the ill-knit character of the Turkish Empire and its steady disintegration prevented their proper enforcement in outlying areas. There the pashas and qadis enjoyed a large measure of independence, and, so long as they kept within reasonable limits, could extort *avantias* with impunity. To appeal against such impositions meant enormous expense, and the defendants usually secured the verdict by means of false witnesses. Even if the case went in favour of the plaintiffs they then had the still more difficult task of persuading the Porte to obtain the requisite redress for them, for in such cases Turkish dilatoriness, evasion, and obstruction were apt to be as valuable weapons as they later proved themselves in the more exalted issues of diplomacy.

Moreover, the capitulations, even if respected and enforced by every official in the sultan's service, would have provided no protection against the fanaticism and ill humour of the Turkish mob. Even with the greatest circumspection and care the Europeans were liable to be beaten, pelted, and insulted in the streets without giving the slightest provocation; and at the great public festivals like the Bairam when fierce gusts of religious pride swept across the populace it was not safe for any of them to appear in the streets. Dudley North was once timing a rope-dancer with his watch in his hand when the rope broke, and the bystanders immediately accused him of causing this mishap by enchantment because they had seen him muttering over the watch which he

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Finch in his dealings with the grand vizier Kara Mustafa found to his cost that the capitulations were 'like a peice of wett parchment that may be stretch'd any way'.

held. That extremely prudent person only escaped very severe handling from the crowd because he was wise enough to creep away as fast as he could.<sup>1</sup> Even as late as 1769 the knowledge that the Austrian resident Brognard was watching the procession of Mohammed's sacred standard through the streets of Constantinople caused the people to rise and sack the house in which he was concealed. The windows were broken, iron bars were torn down, some of the crowd actually gnawing them with their teeth in their frenzy, Brognard's wife and daughters were dragged by the hair and trampled underfoot, and only with great difficulty were they saved from death and escorted back to Pera.<sup>2</sup> The news of the battle of Tchesmé in 1770 led to a general massacre at Smyrna in which 15,000 Greeks and 2 Europeans lost their lives. The other Franks merely owed their preservation to the fact that it was a Sunday and they were not out in the streets.<sup>3</sup> Even in normal times it was not safe to wander from the street where the merchants dwelt without an escort, and down to the end of the eighteenth century it was customary to be accompanied by a Janissary as a guard.<sup>4</sup>

Both for the truculence of its rulers and for the ferocity of its populace Egypt was pre-eminent in this kind of treatment, which lingered there long after it had ceased in the rest of the sultan's dominions. The history of the French, who had the chief commercial foothold in the country down to the nineteenth century, was one long succession of *avanias* and ill treatment at the hands of the beys who governed the land, while the natives seem to have had an innate antipathy to all Europeans and lost no opportunity of molesting or reviling them. They were set upon and beaten by mobs of fanatics, forced to dismount ignominiously from the donkeys they rode (for no Franks but the consuls were permitted to mount a horse in Egypt), dared not go out of the streets they were accustomed to frequent, and were a favourite prey of informers in the local courts. As Christian evidence was not allowed against the Moslem, and as the accuser had no compunction about bearing false witness against an infidel, the result was invariably a heavy fine imposed on the hapless victim. Even if a Christian was slain his murderers would protest that he had attacked them

<sup>1</sup> North, *Lives*, iii, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Von Hammer, xvi, pp. 203-5.

<sup>3</sup> Tott, *Memoirs*, ii, pp. 236-7.

<sup>4</sup> Chandler, p. 67. Morritt (*Letters*, p. 67) moved about Constantinople in European clothes without a guard and without being ill treated, and so did Wilson in 1812 (*Diary*, i, pp. 119-20), but even then he described it as contrary to custom.

or blasphemed against the law of Mohammed, and these imaginary offences had to be redeemed in money by those of his nation who survived him.<sup>1</sup> Frequently individuals were imprisoned on the pretext of having been found with a Turkish woman. The penalty for this was death, but it was generally commuted for a heavy fine.<sup>2</sup> Recourse to justice was not possible when the law and its instruments were thus used to perpetrate injustice, and as the merchants could look for no redress from Constantinople they were obliged to endure these 'rabblings' and extortions without complaint or retaliation, and to pay whatever was demanded of them as their sole security against further violence.<sup>3</sup> Not until the rise of Mohammed Ali was the lot of the European in Egypt improved, but the old dislike of them lasted on and was probably one of the factors which lent strength to Colonel Arabi and the movement he headed.<sup>4</sup>

In such circumstances there could be little intercourse between the Turk and the Frank; and only a few Europeans succeeded in breaking through the barriers of religious and racial prejudice and made friends among the Turks. Dudley North had mastered their language and lived on terms of intimacy with several high officials in Constantinople, and Frampton, who also learnt to speak Turkish, was a friend both of the qadi and of the mufti of Aleppo.<sup>5</sup> But these were exceptions, and the majority of the merchants in the Levant had little contact with Turkish life, ways of thought, or maxims of conduct. They repaid the arrogance of their hosts with a scornful reserve and made no effort to understand or to appreciate them. It became a maxim among them that 'a Turk is not capable of real friendship towards a Christian',<sup>6</sup> and that self-interest or force were the only motives he understood. Hence the factories lived self-centred lives and the two peoples ignored one another as far as possible. The Turks rarely appeared in the Frankish quarters,<sup>7</sup> and the Franks sought for no society outside of their own countrymen. Maundrell, writing from Aleppo in 1699, at a time

<sup>1</sup> Thevenot, ii, pp. 815-16.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> For the treatment of Europeans in Egypt see Arvieux, i, p. 204; Pococke, i, pp. 18-19; Volney, i, pp. 12-168, 230.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Rich. Burton found that even Egyptians who had lived for years as servants with Europeans still retained the liveliest loathing for the manners and customs of their masters.

<sup>5</sup> Frampton, *Life*, p. 42. Alexander Russell was also 'on a footing of intimacy' with the mufti of Aleppo (Russell, i, p. 337).

<sup>6</sup> Rycaut, *Maxims of Turkish Polity*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Tournefort, ii, p. 498.

when the crumbling of their power was beginning to tame Turkish pride, said 'as for our living among them [i.e. the natives] it is with all possible quiet and safety and that's all we desire, their conversation being not in the least entertaining. Our delights are among ourselves; and here being more than forty of us we never want a more friendly and pleasant conversation.'<sup>1</sup> Russell's evidence proves that the same atmosphere existed half a century later. 'The mutual distance' was still 'unsociably maintained' between the two peoples; few of the factors took the trouble to acquire any knowledge of the Turkish tongue; and they had little or no social intercourse with their hosts.<sup>2</sup> Even in trade circumstances conspired to keep the two races apart, for the Turks were no merchants and had little interest in commerce, and it was with the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks, who dominated the traffic of the Levant, rather than with their Turkish rulers that the factors did most of their business. It was impossible, moreover, for any Frank to marry a Turkish woman. Death was the penalty for such a union of Christian and Moslem, so that one of the most powerful avenues to friendship and good understanding was closed by an insuperable barrier.

The relations which existed between the English and the other Europeans in the Levant were naturally more intimate than those with the Turks, although in the narrow society and close contact which circumstances forced upon them national rivalries and embittered disputes on petty points of etiquette and ceremony were not infrequent. When pride was touched and nerves were frayed such squabbles led to bad feeling and even to blows, and fracas, ending in broken heads and a babel of contradictory expostulations before the local qadi, were common. But these disputes did not interrupt friendly relations between individuals, and to travellers of different nationality an unvarying hospitality and courtesy was extended. Even in wartime, when public ceremonies between the consuls of the conflicting nations were suspended, individuals continued to visit and amuse themselves as usual, politics being discreetly banished from conversation.<sup>3</sup> Thus in 1696—although England and France had then been engaged in hostilities for seven years—Maundrell and his party were hospitably entertained by the French merchants at Sidon, they travelled to Jerusalem in the company and under the protection

<sup>1</sup> Maundrell, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Russell, i, pp. 226-7; ii, pp. 2, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, ii, p. 13.

of the French consul, and during the whole of their stay in the Holy City they resided at his house.

Between the English and French ambassadors and consuls there was a standing dispute over the question of precedence which the French claimed to enjoy at all times. This narrowed their intercourse, but complimentary visits were always exchanged between them with elaborate procedure and formality on the principal feasts and on the first day of the year. Relations between the ordinary merchants were not restricted to such formal occasions, and the rank and file of the various nationalities united freely for recreation and social life. At Smyrna the Franks mingled with each other without restraint and there was a cosmopolitan and convivial atmosphere in the street where they dwelt which earned for it the name of *Petit Paris*.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but French, English, and Dutch was spoken there; Capuchins, Jesuits, and Franciscans were all to be seen promenading; there was public singing and preaching in the churches and consular chapels; and cabarets where people played and danced and made good cheer were open day and night.<sup>2</sup> In addition also to the frequent exchange of hospitality in the form of banquets between various individuals there were numerous carnivals and fêtes, notably the annual ceremony of the 'Papegai', or election of a carnival king in which all participated.<sup>3</sup> At Aleppo there were card parties, weekly concerts, and masquerades during carnival time.<sup>4</sup>

In the seventeenth century, at least, the English factors appear to have been a much more united body than their French rivals. There was, of course, business competition between them, but there is very little evidence of any serious dissension or outbreak of disobedience outside of the Civil War period, and they invariably acted together in anything which concerned the whole 'nation'.<sup>5</sup> The French, on the other hand, agreed very badly, 'as being a sort of people that love to harbour dissension and contention one among another'.<sup>6</sup> Nointel reported of those in Aleppo that it would be difficult to find a body of merchants where dissensions reigned with more force, and that they were not only divided among themselves, but were also at variance with their consul;<sup>7</sup> while Ferriol wrote that the Cairo factory had always been mutinous and reluctant to submit to any rule.<sup>8</sup> Nor was there any sense of

<sup>1</sup> Broughton, ii, p. 31.    <sup>2</sup> Tournefort, ii, p. 499.    <sup>3</sup> Arvieux, i, pp. 100-2.

<sup>4</sup> Russell, ii, p. 12.    <sup>5</sup> Arvieux, i, p. 112.    <sup>6</sup> Chardin, pp. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> Vandal, *Nointel*, Appendix, p. 338.    <sup>8</sup> Ferriol, *Corresp.*, p. 112.

unity between the various French settlements; and each one exaggerated its hardships at the cost of truth with a view to shirking reasonable taxation and imposing the burden upon the others. Many of the abuses in these factories were due primarily to faulty organization and to the complexity—or even the contrariety—of the multitudinous regulations which controlled them from home. In his tour of inspection in 1777 de Tott found that the evils he had been sent round to remedy sprang from the faults of the law rather than from any defiance of it. The administration of the English factories never produced the same difficulties and the Levant Company had no trouble with its factors after 1660. It was inevitable, in such small societies, that friction should break out from time to time between them and their superiors: Kinnoull, for example, had a little difficulty at Constantinople in 1734 with ‘some troublesome young spirits in our factory who hate anyone that has a different way of thinking from themselves and that they imagine is above them’;<sup>1</sup> but such disputes were purely personal and transitory, and never endangered the well-being of the factory or the prosperity of its trade.

At Constantinople the Company had at first rented a house in Galata in which the factors and probably the ambassador lived.<sup>2</sup> But Barton moved up the hill-side to Pera to ‘a faire house within a large field and pleasant gardens compassed with a wall’; and all the European factors had to follow when, during the Turkish war with Venice (1645–69), the Venetian convent at Galata was converted into a mosque and the Franks who lived near it were ordered to move. They accordingly went to Pera, but their warehouses still lay below in Galata. These were built very solidly in stone standing by themselves, with as few windows as possible, and with iron doors and shutters as precautions against the frequent fires which swept across the crowded city.<sup>3</sup> The houses in Pera were constructed of wood and plaster, and Kinnoull grumbled that it was ‘almost impossible to protect oneself from the cold in these paper houses’.<sup>4</sup> The embassy was rented and paid for by the ambassador.<sup>5</sup> It was nearly destroyed by fire in 1725, and in 1809 Adair found it in a ‘ruinous condition’, rain coming through

<sup>1</sup> S.P. 97. 27. Kinnoull to D. of Newcastle, Nov. 30, 1734.

<sup>2</sup> Sanderson, note p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 134; Tournefort, i, p. 470.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. 97. 26. Kinnoull to Chas. de la Faye, Jan. 13, 1733.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. 97. 25. Stanyan to Newcastle, Oct. 22, 1725. The rent was nearly £300 per annum in 1799 (*H.M.C. Fortescue*, iv, pp. 443–4).

the roof, the furniture irreparably damaged, and the garden a heap of rubbish.<sup>1</sup>

At Smyrna the houses of the Franks were the best and most handsome buildings in the city. They were all in one street which ran along the shore, and those which backed on to the water had at the bottoms of their gardens landing-places and quays of wood and stone suitable for the loading and unloading of goods. These stages also provided an agreeable promenade where the merchants could take the air and view the harbour. The houses were built round three sides of a court and had two stories, the ground floor being used as a warehouse, while the living-rooms were upstairs. The apartments were spacious, and all had long galleries and terraces open to the air for coolness. The street, which could be closed at night, was so narrow that it was difficult to pass a camel laden, but the gardens were full of little groves of orange and lemon trees which served to 'recreate very agreeably both the sight and smell'. Over all floated the banners of the various national factories; and the height of the flagstaffs and their gilding or painting was a matter of friendly emulation.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere the factors were obliged to reside in large rectangular buildings called khans. These were built in the collegiate style round a large central court which frequently had a fountain in the middle of it. In them, as in the older university colleges, the occupants had separate rooms which were generally on the first floor, the ground floor being devoted to stabling and storage.<sup>3</sup> At night the doors of the khan were locked. In Alexandria the keys had to be taken each evening to the aga, or commander of the castle, and sent for again in the morning. In the same city the gates had also to be closed before midday on Wednesdays because the Turks had a prophecy that one Wednesday the Christians would surprise the Ottoman Empire while the Moslems were at their midday prayer.<sup>4</sup> The roofs of the khans were flat, and where the summer heat was excessive, as it was at Aleppo, the merchants slept on the roofs or terraces.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Adair, *Treaty of the Dardanelles*, i, pp. 263-5.

<sup>2</sup> Wheler, i, p. 238; Arvieux, i, p. 39; Motraye, i, p. 154; Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 37; Chandler, p. 64; Sample, ii, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> In Aleppo the English occupied three of these buildings when Fynes Moryson was there in 1596. Drummond says that the apartments in these khans resembled the cells of a convent.

<sup>4</sup> Arvieux, i, p. 176. Dumont (p. 200) says Friday was the day.

<sup>5</sup> Thevenot, iii, p. 102; Pococke, ii, pt. i, p. 151.

In all the ports the factors at first wore the robes and pelisses of the Turks and had long mustachios like the natives. The English and Dutch are said to have resembled exactly the people of the country, but the French could always be recognized by their manner. The object of this adoption of Turkish dress was to minimize the chances of insult which strange and conspicuous clothing would have produced among a semi-barbarous people, but towards the end of the seventeenth century its necessity became less pressing in places like Constantinople and Smyrna, and many wore European costume with sword, wig, and cocked hat.<sup>1</sup> When the dress of the country was used the consuls wore their wigs and hats in order to distinguish them. In some of the factories in the eighteenth century this mixture of eastern and western clothing was the usual habit of all the Franks, but in the more distant parts of the Levant, and especially in Egypt, they were obliged to wear full Turkish costume until nearly the close of the century, and the only thing which distinguished them from the natives was a red sash done up in a certain manner which they wore upon their caps. By 1792, however, they were able in Alexandria to wear their own dress without being molested.<sup>2</sup>

The English merchants carried with them into the Levant as much as was possible of the social life and recreations of their native land; and society in the factories was a faithful, though necessarily imperfect, reflection of that in England. The exile and monotony of life in the east was relieved by the hospitality, the good cheer, and the sport of the English gentry from whom most of the factors were descended. In good living and conviviality they surpassed those of any other nation. They were magnificent in their clothing, houses, furniture, horses, and equipage; their tables were loaded abundantly; they kept large staffs of domestics; and they gave lavish entertainments which were generally prolonged until their conviviality was drowned by the good liquor provided. Arvieux said of these festivities that when they took place in the houses of rich and generous merchants, and especially in the houses of the English, 'one can add nothing to the magnificence of the feast, nor to the quantity of the wine drunk. They smash and break everything to do honour to those to whom they drink, and the debauch is sometimes carried so far that finding

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *17<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 468. At Aleppo in the middle of the eighteenth century some wore European dress, but many still retained eastern costume (Rus-sell, ii, p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Browne, p. 8.



nothing more to break they light a great fire and fling on it hats, wigs, coats, even shirts, after which these gentlemen are forced to remain in bed until other garments have been made for them'.<sup>1</sup>

Such scenes were the usual conclusion of any social gathering or exchange of hospitality. At Constantinople the 'jolly cup' commonly closed the evening,<sup>2</sup> either in the merchants' houses, or in the cabarets of Galata where the Franks enjoyed a kind of liberty found scarcely anywhere else in the Ottoman Empire and where even indulgent Turks came to drink wine.<sup>3</sup> At any of the fêtes at Smyrna the English and Dutch had usually to be carried to bed in an inebriated condition,<sup>4</sup> and when they went on board the ships in the harbour to the collations which it was customary for the officers to give to the members of the factory before sailing, they had generally to be lowered by ropes into the boats waiting to convey them home, because their legs were too unreliable to negotiate the ladders.<sup>5</sup> The arrival of any travellers was invariably made the excuse for a banquet, and at Aleppo there existed a convivial society called the 'Knights of the Malhue'—or valley of salt—into which strangers were initiated with suitable rites.<sup>6</sup> Gambling of all kinds was much in vogue among the factors, and when Sir William Trumbull arrived in Constantinople in 1687 it had reached such a pitch that the young merchants were not only hazarding their own, but also their principal's estates. Trumbull laid out a bowling green in his garden as a counter-diversion and threw it open for the use of the factory. Being a novelty, it was much patronized and was—so he himself asserted—successful in drawing many factors from gaming.<sup>7</sup> Tennis also seems to have been played at Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> At Smyrna cards were frequently played at night, and at the carnival season there was an assembly 'upon which', wrote Drummond in 1744, '(as it is in its infancy) it would be cruel to criticize, seeing the ladies are all natives of the country, where gallantry and true politeness are but little known'.<sup>9</sup> Drummond was responsible for establishing a lodge of freemasons in Smyrna, which was the first to exist in the Levant, and another was founded at Constantinople in 1748.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arvieux, i, pp. 112, 132.

<sup>2</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> Tournefort, i, p. 507. Those Turks who broke the Prophet's prohibition of wine breakfasted before going to the Mosque on baked apples and coffee 'to dissipate the fumes and smell' of the forbidden liquor (*Motraye*, i, p. 193).

<sup>4</sup> Masson, 17<sup>e</sup> *Siècle*, p. 471.

<sup>5</sup> Arvieux, i, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> Teonge, pp. 167–8.

<sup>7</sup> Addit. MSS. 34799, f. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Sanderson, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Drummond, p. 120. By native he meant Greek.

<sup>10</sup> Drummond, p. 120; S.P. 97. 33. Porter to D. of Bedford, Nov. 26, 1748.

There were set times appointed in the factories for recreation and sport. At Smyrna no work was done on Saturday, which was given over to amusement,<sup>1</sup> and in Aleppo during the winter the whole factory went out hunting twice a week, or in summer they rode just before sunset when the heat had declined.<sup>2</sup> Most of the merchants kept their own horses, dogs, and hawks, and at Smyrna they procured a pack of hounds and hunted in the country as in England 'which was a prodigious mystery' to the 'Turks.'<sup>3</sup> At Aleppo greyhounds were used for coursing, and the factors shot wild duck, and fished or played cricket at a spot called 'Greene Platte' which lay four miles out of the city.<sup>4</sup> In early days these diversions were generally only indulged in by the whole factory, for it was not safe for any individual to venture far into the country on account of marauders.<sup>5</sup> Even as late as the mid-eighteenth century the Europeans at Smyrna only went out in large parties because of the numerous murders by banditti which took place in the surrounding country;<sup>6</sup> but in Pococke's time at Aleppo, where the merchants enjoyed an unusual amount of liberty and respect,<sup>7</sup> excursions could be made into the country and nights passed in tents without fear of molestation.<sup>8</sup> At Cairo only the mornings were devoted to business, the afternoons being spent in riding to the fields and gardens to the north of the city; and here as in all the other factories no work was done on Sunday or on the Jewish Sabbath. In places like Smyrna which stood among the ruins of the Greek and Roman world, some of the merchants found a more serious form of recreation in the study of, and the search for antiquities, and of all the Europeans the English were responsible for exporting most of the precious remains of classical and oriental civilization: a pursuit in which many of the ambassadors set a vigorous example. Thus Pindar brought back a collection of oriental manuscripts, Roe busied himself in securing marbles, Ainslie collected ancient coins, while Lord Elgin's booty is now known all over the world.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rycaut, *Hist. of the Turks*, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Maundrell, pp. 148-9; Verney, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> North, *Lives*, ii, p. 353.

<sup>4</sup> Teonge, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> Even the road from Aleppo to Scanderoon was haunted by robbers who sometimes robbed the caravans bringing goods up from the coast to Aleppo.

<sup>6</sup> Verney, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 160; Drummond, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> Volney, ii, 152.

<sup>8</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. i, p. 152; Russell, ii, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> William Ray, Consul at Smyrna 1677-1703, collected 2,000 coins and medals which he presented to the Bodleian. In the larger factories the Company maintained small libraries for the instruction and amusement of its factors. At

Outside the large cities the more wealthy among the merchants had country houses to which they could escape from the heat of the summer and the plague which it brought in its train. At Constantinople in the seventeenth century these were at the little village of Belgrade, on wooded slopes overlooking the Black Sea—a spot which, according to Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu, ‘perfectly answers the description of the Elysian fields’.<sup>1</sup> But it went out of fashion in the following century and the villages along the European shores of the Bosphorus became more popular.<sup>2</sup> Of these Buyekdere was the most favoured, and—a little later—Bulgalari.<sup>3</sup> At one time the French used Princes Island, but found the danger of being detained there by contrary winds too great an inconvenience.<sup>4</sup> In these villages the merchants enjoyed greater freedom, and the few European ladies, who were obliged in the capital to live secluded lives in order to conform with Turkish ideas of decorum, were able to join in the amusements more freely. At Smyrna the country houses were situated in the villages on the plain which lay about six miles to the south-east, and which formed ‘a pleasant and convenient place for divertisement, especially in summer’.<sup>5</sup> As a health resort and a refuge from plague the merchants of Aleppo went up into the mountains of Bylan which overlooked the Bay of Scanderoon. Nathaniel Harley described this spot as a place ‘among mountains inhabited by none but wild beasts or as savage men. But, however, the near resemblance the air has to that of England has invited several of us to this dreadful place . . . we can enjoy the spring in the midst of summer; nay with a small remove of one or two hundred yards can enjoy summer or winter. Though we are in the clouds and scarce ever dry, yet everybody enjoys his health’.<sup>6</sup>

For transport the merchants relied mainly on horses, or, where they were forbidden, on donkeys. Coaches were of little use,<sup>7</sup> and the sedan chair was frowned upon by the Turks at first. When

Aleppo there were 228 volumes in 1688, while in Smyrna in 1702 the collection numbered 111. Of these latter 45 were theological (including such works as Tertullian, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Tillotson’s sermons) and another 9 were ecclesiastical histories. Profane history and mathematics accounted for a further 22 volumes.

<sup>1</sup> Montagu, *Letters*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Tott, i, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Morritt, pp. 80, 95. In Wilson’s time (1812) most of the ambassadors went to Bulgalari (*Diary*, i, pp. 115–16).

<sup>4</sup> Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Covell, *Diary*, p. 140; Pococke, ii, pt. ii, p. 39; Chandler, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> *H.M.C. Portland*, ii, p. 250.

<sup>7</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 224. Lord Winchilsea took one out, but sent it home again.

Sir John Finch introduced one into Constantinople the grand vizier threatened 'to break that cage on his head';<sup>1</sup> but they were soon established, and once adopted they lingered on in Turkey long after they had disappeared elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of the English factors were bachelors. They went out to Turkey as young men who could not afford to keep wives, and marriage was discouraged by the home authorities because women and children could be nothing but a nuisance and a danger in the circumstances in which the merchants lived in the Levant. In early days, at least, it was usually only the ambassador who had an English wife with him. The others, being forbidden to touch a Turkish woman on pain of death, and cut off from the rest of the Franks by religious prejudice, sometimes married Greek women. But in 1677 the grand vizier Kara Mustafa issued an edict declaring that all Franks who married subjects of the sultan were to be deprived of the benefits of their capitulations, and themselves to rank as Turkish subjects.<sup>3</sup> Efforts were promptly made to enforce this in the case of a Mr. Pentlow of Smyrna, whose estate was confiscated and his executors imprisoned because they had tried to send his widow (a Greek) and children and money to England without permission from the Turkish authorities. After this incident the Levant Company issued severe regulations against such marriages. The factors were called upon to take an oath promising not to marry any Turkish subject;<sup>4</sup> the ambassadors were ordered to prohibit such unions; and officials were dismissed for defying this rule.<sup>5</sup> In course of time, however, edicts, regulations, and oaths all became obsolete, and in the eighteenth century the English were again intermarrying freely with the Greeks.<sup>6</sup> These Greek ladies usually wore their native dress and adhered to their own church, although their children were often sent to England to be educated. But the majority of the factors remained single, and placed a very liberal interpretation upon the liberty they might enjoy in that condition. In a land where vice

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Under the Turk*, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1875 they were in common use (Scudamore, *A Sheaf of Memories*, p. 26).

<sup>3</sup> Rycaut, *History of the Turks*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Motraye, i, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> There was a dismissal for this reason as late as 1705 (S.P. 105. 115. Company to G. Bridges, Treasurer at Const., Sept. 13, 1705).

<sup>6</sup> Chandler, p. 74. In Alexander Russell's time all the factors at Aleppo were still bachelors—but a note by his son who edited a later edition of his *History* in 1794 states that there were subsequently several married ladies from Europe at Aleppo (Russell, ii, p. 11).

was easy and all the usual restraining influences of relatives and social conventions were absent, it was inevitable that some should give full reign to their passions, and compromise with the morals of the orient was not easily resistible. Looser connexions than the marriage bond were frequent and the Company found it necessary to send out admonitions against vice and sensuality from time to time.

Fires and earthquakes were a constant menace to life and property in most of the Levant cities. Nearly the whole of Constantinople was built of wood, and in its narrow crowded streets the flames spread too quickly to be checked, even if the organization to fight them had existed. But the only method used was to pull down the neighbouring houses, which occasionally restricted the area of the fire, but more often merely afforded an opportunity of plunder for the janissaries employed on the work. Hardly a year passed but some quarter of the city was swept by these devastating outbreaks and the European quarter was, of course, no more exempt than any other. In 1696 all the houses of the English merchants but one were destroyed; the embassy was burnt with all its contents in 1725; and in 1810 the whole of Pera was reduced to ashes.<sup>1</sup> A similar outbreak in Smyrna in 1763 left not a single house of any of the Europeans standing and the city mob seized the opportunity to indulge in an orgy of rapine and outrage at the expense of the merchants which the Turkish authorities did nothing to restrain.<sup>2</sup> But earthquakes were the more common visitation here. In 1688 a dreadful quake overthrew most of the houses in the city and killed 5,000 people. Many of the English happened to be in the country as it was a Saturday, but two of them were killed by a falling beam, and in the fire which followed the earthquake they lost goods to the value of £300,000.<sup>3</sup> Usually, if any warning was given, the Europeans hurried on board the ships in the harbour with their valuables before the quake occurred.<sup>4</sup>

Plague was the greatest danger to health and life. The crowded towns, the lack of sanitation, the heat of the Levant summer, the swamps and marshes around many of the ports, and the fatalism of the Turks which caused them to scorn any precautionary measures made the dread visitation almost an annual affair.

<sup>1</sup> Rycaut, *History of the Turks*, p. 538; S.P. 97. 25. Stanyan to Newcastle, Oct. 22, 1725; Adair, *Treaty of the Dardenelles*, ii, pp. 33-4.

<sup>2</sup> S.P. 97. 42. Grenville to Egremont, Sept. 1, 1763; Grenville to Halifax, Jan. 2, 1764.

<sup>3</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, pp. 296, 312.

<sup>4</sup> Arvieux, i, p. 40.

Hundreds died daily during the summer months and whole cities became nothing but gigantic mortuaries. Constantinople and Aleppo were particularly liable to these horrors. In the former it was not even considered desirable to order public prayers for deliverance until a thousand corpses per day were carried through the gates of the city for burial;<sup>1</sup> while Fynes Moryson said that few factors ever returned alive from Aleppo. Flight was the only precaution which could be taken against the foul disease and the only hope of protection. When it broke out the Europeans either withdrew to the country where the air was better, or else, having collected sufficient provisions for several months, they shut themselves up in their houses and had no intercourse with the outer world. Even the stray cats and dogs which tried to enter were killed for fear they might carry infection with them. In Egypt provisions were left at the gates of the houses, picked up with iron tongs and dipped into a barrel of water before being handled.<sup>2</sup> At Smyrna they were washed in vinegar and water and then aired or fumigated before use. Letters were sprinkled with vinegar and smoked with sulphur before being opened. Visitors had to stand outside and inquire about the welfare of the occupants from a distance.<sup>3</sup> While the plague raged no seamen were allowed to land from a ship, vessels were kept anchored at a distance from the shore, and all goods were well aired before being loaded.<sup>4</sup> But such precautions were not always successful and disease took a heavy toll among the factors. From May to August 1669 the plague swept away 150,000 people in Aleppo and seven of the English succumbed to it. The following month John Verney reported that five more had been buried, making a quarter of the factory who died in that fatal summer.<sup>5</sup> Nor were those in high places exempt. Lord Winchelsea lost a daughter, Hussey died of the plague, in 1762 Grenville had to fly from the embassy at a moment's notice in the middle of the night because a servant of his household had developed the fatal symptoms, and in 1813 Liston and his whole family were kept prisoners in their house for over three months, not even a servant going out of the gates

<sup>1</sup> Stowe MSS. 220, f. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Volney, i, p. 254. Similar precautions were taken at Aleppo. Water was obtained through a small wooden spout let into the door. This spout was locked and was only opened in the presence of one of the Europeans (Russell, ii, pp. 380-2).

<sup>3</sup> Chandler, p. 317.

<sup>4</sup> Porter, *State of the Turkey Commerce*, &c., p. 442.

<sup>5</sup> Verney, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 156.

because of the plague. At the close of the Company's history letters began to come in from Aleppo, from 1823 onwards, telling of the ghastly results of the new scourge of cholera which had just reached Syria from the east.<sup>1</sup> Zante was an unhealthy place,<sup>2</sup> but Scanderoon had the worst reputation for being fever-stricken, and it was known throughout the Levant as the 'Bane of Franks'. It was a miserable village in which, according to Volney, the tombs were more numerous than the houses, and the factors had 'a languid air, yellow complexion, livid eyes and dropsical bellies'. Ships which remained there during the summer frequently lost a third of their crews.<sup>3</sup> The mortality among all the Franks was high; but on the other hand there is plenty of evidence that the tougher—and perhaps more prudent—among the English managed to live for long periods in the Levant, particularly in the eighteenth century when the accumulated experience of conditions in Turkey and improved medical knowledge must have increased the prospects of survival. Dudley North spent 19 years in the Levant; Nathaniel Harley was at Aleppo for 35 years before he died; and the last two consuls at Smyrna, Anthony Hayes and Francis Werry, held the office for the remarkable period of 63 years.<sup>4</sup>

Those who died in the Turkish ports were usually buried in the Greek cemeteries. At Smyrna their burial ground was called St. Veneranda, from the Greek Church which stood near, and contained 'very magnificent marble tombs inrich'd with fine relievos'.<sup>5</sup> They were carried to their graves amid the booming of guns from the ships, for the Turks forbade the use of bells by the Christians; and even these sad occasions were sometimes marked by feasts at which an appropriate sobriety was not always preserved. It was a rule of the Company that when a factor died his warehouse, rooms, books, and money should be sealed up until after the burial. Then an inventory was taken by the chancellor before the estate was handed over to the dead man's executors.<sup>6</sup>

Those who survived their long years of exile reaped some reward in the considerable fortunes which they were able to amass. Sir Paul Pindar brought back a princely estate. Dudley North piled

<sup>1</sup> See especially S.P. 105. 141. J. Barker to the Company, July 16, 1823.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Volney, ii, pp. 157-8.

<sup>4</sup> Hayes 1762-94, Werry 1794, and still there in 1825. An even more vigorous example was the Venetian consul at Smyrna at the end of the seventeenth century who lived to be 118 and had 5 wives and 60 children, without counting mistresses and slaves (Tournefort, ii, pp. 496-7).

<sup>5</sup> Du Mont, p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> *H.M.C. Downshire*, i, p. 334.

up sufficient wealth to enable him to live in affluence for the remainder of his life, and, as sheriff of London and subsequently a commissioner of the treasury, to take an active part in the political life of his time. John Verney returned to England after twelve years in Aleppo with a fortune which made him an important man in the city, a shareholder both in the Levant and East India Companies, and an adventurer in the Guinea trade—a position which he strengthened by a prudent economical nature. This trait in his character, as well as the popular estimate of the wealth of a returned Turkey merchant, are shown in his letter to his father August 1674. 'If ever I settle in the way of marriage', he wrote, 'I am certain the first proffers are best, and at a man's first coming from Turkey, for then estates are least known and rumours run high.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Pentlow of Smyrna, who died in 1677, and left £20,000 as a result of thirty years' trading in the Levant, is perhaps a more typical example of the measure of success which the average merchant might expect.<sup>2</sup> But all these examples come from the seventeenth century. The decline of the Company's trade in the following century must have reduced the profits of its members, and although it is possible, if contemporary accusations can be believed, that a few great merchants did monopolize the trade and make rich gains, the generality could not anticipate the golden harvest which awaited their forerunners.<sup>3</sup>

The influence of the merchants who returned from Turkey upon their native country was not great, for their numbers were too small and their fortunes too moderate in extent to allow them to make any lasting impress on English society. These 'pashas' from the Levant had not the money of the West India sugar planters or the 'nabobs' from Bengal, and they never acquired the political power which those favoured individuals enjoyed in the eighteenth century. They contributed their part to the material enrichment of their country; in an artistic sense they added to the wealth of the nation by the spoils they brought back from the Levant; they did important service to the development of geography and travel; and for the rest were content, when they returned, to

<sup>1</sup> Verney, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Morden, the founder of Morden College, Blackheath, is another example. He brought back 'a fair estate' from Aleppo (*Morden and his College*, A. E. Martin Harvey).

<sup>3</sup> One factor at Aleppo in 1759 expressed the hope that he would be able to retire to England with a fortune of £10,000–12,000 (S.P. 110. 36—(?) to William Bellamy, Leghorn, Oct. 15, 1759).



take up again the threads of family life which death had not severed during their long absence, and to sink back quietly into that county or commercial society from which they had sprung. Unimportant in their individual lives, collectively they bequeathed a legacy of intrepidity, courage, and endurance which entitles them to an honoured rank among the pioneers of English trade and empire.



## APPENDIX I

### THE AMBASSADORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE, 1583-1824

- William Harborne. 1582-8. Royal credentials dated Nov. 20, 1582; arrived Constantinople Mar. 26, 1583. Left Aug. 1588.
- Edward Barton. 1588-97. Left as agent by Harborne. Commissioned as ambassador either 1591 or 1593. Died at Constantinople Dec. 1597.
- Henry Lello. 1597-1607. Barton's secretary. Took his place in 1597. Left Constantinople May 24, 1607.
- Sir Thomas Glover. 1606-11. Articles with the Company dated Apr. 13, 1606. Arrived Constantinople Dec. 23, 1606. Recalled by Company's letter of Sept. 17, 1611.
- Paul Pindar. 1611-20. Articles with the Company dated Sept. 27, 1611. Arrived Constantinople Dec. 1611. Company's letter of recall dated Jan. 25, 1618. Left Constantinople by May 1620.
- Sir John Eyre (or Ayres). 1619-21. Royal commission dated Dec. 14, 1619. Arrived Constantinople by Apr. 1620. Letter of revocation dated July 9, 1621.
- John Chapman (agent). 1621-2.
- Sir Thomas Roe. 1621-8. Credentials dated Sept. 6, 1621. Arrived Constantinople Dec. 28, 1621. Letter of revocation dated Oct. 26, 1627. Left Constantinople June 1628.
- Sir Peter Wyche. 1627-38. Nominated by the king Nov. 1626. Royal instructions dated Nov. 18, 1627. Arrived Constantinople Apr. 10, 1628. Left May 1639.
- Sir Sackville Crowe. 1633-47. Nominated by the king Nov. 19, 1633. Royal instructions to, dated July 14, 1638. Arrived in Turkey Oct. of the same year. Recalled Jan. 1647. Left Constantinople Nov. 23, 1647.
- Sir Thomas Bendysh. 1647-61. Appointed Jan. 8, 1647. Royal commission dated Feb. 1, 1647. Articles with the Company Mar. 18, 1647. Arrived Constantinople Sept. 26, 1647. Recalled June 25, 1660. Left Constantinople Mar. 11, 1661.
- Richard Salway appointed ambassador by the Lord Protector Aug. 14, 1654. Begged to be excused Feb. 8, 1655. He never left England.
- Richard Lawrence. Sent out as agent 1653. Recalled May 28, 1656.
- Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea. 1660-9. Nominated by the king June 25, 1660. Arrived Constantinople Jan. 17, 1661. Letter of recall dated Dec. 19, 1667. Left Turkey Jan.-May 1669.
- Sir Daniel Harvey. 1668-72. Nominated by the king Jan. 2, 1668. Royal instructions dated Aug. 3, 1668. Arrived Constantinople Dec. 20, 1668. Died in Turkey Aug. 26, 1672.
- Sir John Finch. 1672-81. Elected by the Company on the king's recommendation Nov. 7, 1672. Arrived Constantinople about Mar. 18, 1674. Left Turkey Nov. 1681.
- James, Lord Chandos. 1680-7. Elected by the Company Apr. 22, 1680.

252 THE AMBASSADORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE, 1583-1824

- Royal instructions dated Dec. 29, 1680. Arrived Constantinople July 22, 1681. Recalled Nov. 1684. Left Turkey Oct. 1687.
- (Sir William Soames. 1684-6. Elected on the king's order Dec. 1684. Died at Malta June 1686.)
- Sir William Trumbull. 1686-91. Nominated by the king Oct. 15, 1686. Arrived Constantinople Aug. 17, 1687. Recalled at his own request. Left Turkey July 31, 1691.
- Sir William Hussey. 1690-1. Elected by the Company Apr. 20, 1690. Arrived Vienna Nov. 30, 1690. Departed Apr. 1691. Arrived at Constantinople June 28. Died at Belgrade Sept. 14, 1691.
- (Thomas Coke. *Chargé d'affaires*. Sept. 1691-Feb. 1693.)
- William Harbord. 1691-2. Nominated by the king Nov. 2, 1691. Left England Nov. 9, 1691. Arrived Vienna Mar. 8, 1692. Left June 22 and died at Belgrade July 31, 1692.
- William, Lord Paget. 1692-1702. Appointed June 1692. Royal instructions dated Sept. 5, 1692. Left England Sept. 12, and Vienna Dec. 12, 1692. Arrived Adrianople Jan. 30, and Constantinople July 1693. Asked to be recalled 1697. Left Turkey May 1702.
- (Sir James Rushout. 1697-8. Nominated by the king Apr. 1697. Died Feb. 1698.)
- (George, Earl of Berkeley. 1698-9. Nominated July 16, 1698. Petitioned to be excused May 1699.)
- Sir Robert Sutton. 1700-17. Nominated Dec. 5, 1700. Arrived Adrianople Jan. 7, 1702. Asked to be recalled May 6, 1715. Left Turkey in the summer of 1717. (He arrived at Vienna Sept. 17, 1717.)
- Edward Wortley-Montagu. 1716-18. Elected by the Company on the king's nomination May 10, 1716. Arrived Adrianople Mar. 13, 1717. Recalled Oct. 1717. Left Turkey July 15, 1718.
- Abraham Stanyan. 1717-30. Appointed Oct. 1717. Arrived Adrianople Apr. 24, 1718. Recalled May 16, 1729. Left Turkey July 18, 1730.
- George, Earl of Kinnoull. 1729-36. Appointed May 16, 1729. Arrived Constantinople Apr. 15, 1730. Recalled Aug. 19, 1735. Left Turkey in the autumn of 1736.
- Sir Everard Fawkener, 1735-46. Appointed Aug. 19, 1735. Arrived Constantinople Dec. 19, 1735. Got leave to come home and left Turkey Nov. 8, 1742. Recalled Sept. 4, 1746.
- (Stanhope Aspinwall. *Chargé d'affaires*. Nov. 1742-Feb. 1747.)
- James Porter. 1746-62. Appointed Sept. 4, 1746. Arrived Constantinople Feb. 11, 1747. Recalled at his own request May 1, 1761. Departed from Constantinople May 24, 1762.
- Henry Grenville. 1761-5. Appointed May 1, 1761. Arrived Constantinople Feb. 21, 1762. Recalled May 31, 1765. Left Turkey Oct. 13, 1765.
- (William Kinloch. *Chargé d'affaires*. Oct. 1765-June 1766.)
- John Murray. 1765-75. Appointed Nov. 15, 1765. Arrived Constantinople June 2, 1766. Given leave to return home Jan. 27, 1775. Sailed May 25 and died at Venice, Aug. 9, 1775.
- (Anthony Hayes. *Chargé d'affaires*. May 1775-Oct. 1776.)
- Sir Robert Ainslie. 1775-94. Appointed Sept. 20, 1775. Arrived Con-

THE AMBASSADORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE, 1583-1824 253,

stantinople Oct. 2, 1776. Given leave to return home Sept. 22, 1793.  
Left Turkey 1794.

Robert Liston. 1794-5. Appointed Sept. 22, 1793. Arrived Constantinople May 19, 1794. Left Constantinople Nov. 4, 1795.

(Spencer Smith. Chargé d'affaires. Nov. 1795-Dec. 1799.)

(Francis James Jackson. Appointed July 1796. Resigned by May 1798 without taking up appointment.)

Thomas, Earl of Elgin. 1799-1803. Appointed Dec. 1798. Arrived Constantinople Nov. 6, 1799. Departed Jan. 16, 1803.

(Alexander Straton. Chargé d'affaires. Jan.-May 1803.)

William Drummond. 1803-4. Appointed Jan. 14, 1803. Arrived at the Dardanelles May 1803. Returned to England early 1804.

Charles Arbuthnot. 1804-7. Appointed June 6, 1804. Left Constantinople Jan. 29, 1807.

Robert Adair. 1809-10.

Stratford Canning (Minister Plenipotentiary). 1810-12.

Robert Liston. 1812-20.

Percy Clinton, 6th Viscount Strangford. 1820-4.



## APPENDIX II

### CONSULS OF THE LEVANT COMPANY AT SMYRNA AND ALEPPO

#### *Smyrna*

John Markham. 1611-24.	Paul Rycaut. 1667-77.
William Salter. 1624-30 (?).	William Raye. 1677-1703.
Lawrence Green. 1630-3 (?).	William Sherrard. 1703-16.
James Higgins. 1633-4.	John Cooke. 1716-22.
John Freeman. 1634-5.	George Boddington. 1722-33.
Edward Bernard. 1635-8.	Francis Williams. 1733-41.
Edward Stringer. 1638-43.	Thomas Castleton. 1741-2.
John Wilde. 1644-9.	Samuel Crawley. 1742-62.
Spencer Bretton. 1649-57.	Anthony Hayes. 1762-94.
William Prideaux. 1659-60.	Francis Werry. 1794-. Still in
Richard Baker. 1660-1.	office at the dissolution of the
William Cave. 1661-7.	Company in 1825.

#### *Aleppo*

William Barrett. 1580-5-6 (?).	George Brandon. 1701-6.
James Towerson (?). Died 1586.	William Pilkington. 1707-15.
John Eldred (?). 1586.	John Purnell. 1716-26.
Michael Locke. 1592-4.	Nevil Coke. 1727-40.
George Dorrington (acting as vice- consul in 1596).	Nathaniel Micklethwait. 1740-5.
Thomas Sandys. Sent out 1596. Died the same year.	Arthur Pollard. 1745-51.
Ralph Fitch. 1596-7.	Alexander Drummond. 1751-8.
Richard Colthurst. Sent out 1597.	Francis Browne. 1758.
James Hawarde. Acting as vice- consul in 1606.	William Kinloch. 1759-66.
Paul Pindar. 1606-10.	Henry Preston (pro-consul). 1766- 8.
Bartholomew Haggatt. 1610-16.	William Clark. 1768-70.
Libby Chapman. 1616-21.	Charles Smith (pro-consul). 1770- 2.
Edward Kirkham. 1621-7.	John Abbott. 1770-83.
Thomas Potton. 1627-30.	David Hays (pro-consul). 1783-4.
John Wandesford. 1630-8.	Charles Smith (pro-consul). 1784- 6.
Edward Bernard. 1638-49.	Michael de Vezin (pro-consul). 1786-91. Factory closed 1791- 1803.
Henry Riley. 1649-59.	John Barker appointed consul 1803; still there in 1825.
Benjamin Lannoy. 1659-72.	
Gamaliel Nightingale. 1672-86.	
Thomas Metcalfe. 1686-9.	
Henry Hastings. 1689-1701.	





### APPENDIX III

#### TURKEY AND THE LEVANT

*British shipping cleared outwards and inwards*

(Figures from Marshall).

<i>Year</i>	<i>Outwards ships</i>	<i>Inwards ships</i>
1800	6	14
1801	10	7
1802	18	19
1803	9	27
1804	1	13
1805	6	16
1806	1	18
1814	18	44
1815	23	44
1816	18	26
1817	21	45
1818	29	87
1819	40	53
1820	50	90
1821	31	53
1822	34	53
1823	40	87
1824	122	138
1825	95	167
1826	79	109
1827	61	101
1828	45	93
1829	74	73
1830	95	95



## APPENDIX IV

### THE GOVERNORS OF THE COMPANY

Sir Edward Osborne. 1581. Nominated in Queen Elizabeth's first charter. Renominated in her second charter 1591. He died early in 1592.

Richard Staper. 1592.

Sir Thomas Smith. 1600. Nominated in the new charter of 1600.

Sir Thomas Lowe. 1605. Nominated in the charter of James I.

Sir Hugh Hammersley. 1623. Elected May 8, 1623.

Sir Henry Garraway. 1635. Elected Feb. 3, 1635.

Isaac Pennington. 1644. Elected Feb. 8, 1644, in place of Garraway who had been deprived by the house of commons in Apr. 1643 because of his royalist sympathies.

Sir Andrew Riccard. 1654. Elected Mar. 9, 1654.

John Joliffe. 1672. Elected Sept. 25, 1672.

George, Lord Berkeley. 1673. Elected Feb. 7, 1673.

Sir William Trumbull. 1696. Elected Feb. 11, 1696.

Sir Richard Onslow. 1710.

James, Earl of Carnarvon and (1719) Duke of Chandos. 1718.

John, Earl of Delawar. 1736.

Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury. 1766.

William, Earl of Radnor. 1772.

Frederick, Lord North. 1776.

Francis, Duke of Leeds. 1792.

William, Lord Grenville. 1799.



## INDEX

- Abbas the Great, Shah of Persia, 48.  
 Abbott, —, consul in Egypt, 78.  
 Abbott, Sir Maurice, 42.  
 Abbott, Peter, consul at Acre, 196.  
 Achmet I, 47, 213.  
 Acre, 76, 77, 123, 124, 158, 163, 168, 196.  
 Adair, Robert, 191, 196, 238.  
 Adrianople, 122-3, 196, 222.  
 Ainslie, Sir Robert, 147, 159, 169-73, 177, 181, 182, 214, 242.  
 Albania, 184.  
 Aleppo, factory and trade at, 75-6, 126-7, 162-3; mentioned, 3, 4, 15, 17, 22, 24, 30, 31, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 57, 68, 73, 74, 81, 86, 87, 97, 98, 100, 101, 111, 115, 116, 120, 123, 125, 142, 144, 145, 147, 164, 168, 175, 186, 196, 217, 218, 220, 222, 223, 224, 227, 228, 229, 237, 239, 241, 243, 246, 247, 248.  
 Alexandretta, *see* Scanderoon.  
 Alexandria, trade and consulate at, 33, 77, 125, 158, 166, 174, 185, 197-8; mentioned, 3, 4, 15, 32, 35, 167, 173, 187, 239, 240.  
 Algiers, efforts to trade at, 61-4; mentioned, 15, 23, 59, 60, 77, 84, 137, 176, 212.  
 Ali, Pasha of Janina, 185.  
 Ali Bey, 167-8.  
 Allen, Richard, consul at Algiers and Leghorn, 61, 64.  
 Aman, 15.  
 Amsterdam, 191.  
 Ancona, 149.  
 Angora, 72, 163.  
 Antwerp, 5, 6.  
 Apprenticeship, terms and conditions of, 215.  
 Arabi, Colonel, 235.  
 Arbuthnot, Charles, 184, 189-90.  
 Archangel, 160.  
 Arta, 164.  
 Aspinwall, Stanhope, 144, 175-6, 222.  
 Assistant, office of, 206-7.  
 Athens, consulate at, 122, 164, 196.  
 Audellay, John, 61.  
 Badiley, Richard, 54.  
 Baldwin, George, 168-74.  
 Baldwin, William, 168.  
 Balthazari, Comio de, 2.  
 Banning, Mr., 22.  
 Barats, sale of, 135, 191.  
 Barbary corsairs, 3, 16, 45, 59-62, 203.  
 Barbary merchants, 7, 11.  
 Barker, John, consul at Aleppo, 186, 196.  
 Barnard, Sir Henry, 129.  
 Barrett, John, 15.  
 Barton, Edward, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 34, 80, 81-2, 85, 87, 238.  
 Basra, 76, 103, 145, 163.  
 Bayezid I, 5.  
 Beachy Head, Battle of, 108, 110.  
 Beirut, 123, 196.  
 Belgrade, Peace of, 142.  
 —, village of, 243.  
 Bendysh, Sir Thomas, 51, 63, 78-9, 91-6, 124.  
 Bendysh, the Younger, 79, 124.  
 Berkeley, George, Earl of, 129, 205-6.  
 Betton, Thomas, 203.  
 Biddulph, Rev. William, 222.  
 Bishop, Benjamin, consul in Egypt, 34-5, 77.  
 Black Sea, efforts to trade in, 49; opening of, 180-1.  
 Blake, Robert, 55.  
 Bolton, 74.  
 Book-keeper, office of, 207-8.  
 Brazil, 7.  
 Brest, 108, 110.  
 Brèves, Sieur de, 28, 29, 30, 34, 45.  
 Briggs, Samuel, consul at Alexandria, 185, 197.  
 Bristol, 69, 195.  
 Browne, Robert, consul at Algiers, 63.  
 Browne, Thomas, consul at Tunis, 63.  
 Bruce, James, 168.  
 Bucharest, 196-7.  
 Buckingham, Duke of, 87-8.  
 Bulgari, 243.  
 Bunder Abbas, 103.  
 Burghley, Lord, 10, 19, 20, 27.  
 Buyekdere, 243.  
 Cairo, consulate at, 15, 32, 33, 34, 35, 78-9, 124-5, 165-6, 173, 174, 185; mentioned, 167, 168, 172, 192, 198, 217, 237, 242.  
 Cambrai, League of, 5.  
 Candia, *see* Crete.  
 Canea, 123, 163.  
 Canning, George, 199-200.  
 Cape of Good Hope, 4, 30, 42, 45, 78, 104, 167.  
 Capitulations, the English, 8-9, 14, 27-30, 129; renewed by Sir J. Finch, 98; restored 1809, 191; difficulty of enforcing, 233.

- Capitulations, the French, 9, 28, 107.  
 Carlowitz, Peace of, 131.  
 Carmarthen, Richard, 35.  
 Cartwright, John, 198.  
 Cason, Edmund, agent at Algiers, 63.  
 Caspian Sea, 146.  
 Cecil, Sir Robert, Earl of Salisbury, 29, 81.  
 Cephalonia, 24, 66, 68, 70, 71, 196.  
 Chancellor, office of, 221-2.  
 Chandos, Duke of, 206.  
 Chandos, Lord, 100, 105, 125, 128-30, 133, 134, 206.  
 Chaplains, 222-4.  
 Chapman, John, 85.  
 Chardin, Sir John, 100.  
 Charles I, 42, 86, 88, 89, 90.  
 Charles II, 66, 79, 98, 100, 114, 129-30, 132-3.  
 Charles VI (Emperor), 132.  
 Charles VIII (King of France), 4.  
 Chetney Hill, 150.  
 Child, Sir Josiah, 104, 114-15.  
 Chios, consulate in, 2, 15, 72-3, 163-4, 196; mentioned, 17, 23, 123, 217.  
 Chous, 228.  
 Clements, Joseph, 8.  
 Cloth, woollen, exports to Turkey, 24, 72, 102, 194; exported by the East India Company to Persia, 115-18; French competition in, 141-4; exported from Germany to the Levant, 143, 159.  
 Coffee, trade in from French colonies, 144; from the English colonies, 193.  
 Coffee-houses, 203.  
 Coke, Thomas, 222.  
 Colbert, Jean, 45, 100, 102, 106-7, 119.  
 Collectors of Dues, 207.  
 Colyer, Jacob, 131, 231.  
 Constantinople, factory and trade at, 72, 125-6, 162, 195; mentioned, 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49, 54, 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 64, 68, 69, 73, 75, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 100, 105, 107, 109, 111-12, 116, 129, 130, 131, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 148, 157, 158, 168, 171, 175, 184, 189-90, 210-11, 213, 220, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228, 234, 235, 238, 240, 241, 244, 245, 246.  
 Consulate, 209-10.  
 —, 'strangers' dispute over, 89-92.  
 Consuls, remuneration of, 217-18; terms of service, 218-19; duties of, 219-20.  
 Consul-General, established at Constantinople, 184; for Albania and the Morea, 184, 196; for Egypt, 173, 185-6.  
 Convoys, 212-13.  
 Cooke, William, 62.  
 Cotton, imported from the Levant, 74-5, 159, 203; Dutch rivalry in trade in, 149-50; West Indies and Levant cotton, 159; expansion of English manufacture and export of, 192-4, imports of, from the Levant, 193.  
 Coventry, William, 212.  
 Cowley, John, consul on Zante, 67.  
 Crete, consulate in, 2, 73, 123, 163, 196.  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 51-5, 93-4.  
 Crowe, Sir Sackville, 54, 88-92.  
 Currants, trade in, 24; impositions on, 35-9; English trade in with Zante, 67-70, 121; regulation of trade in, 70-2; imports of from the Levant, 193, 196.  
 Curtis, Mr., 222.  
 Customs duties in Turkey, 14, 27-8, 129, 213.  
 Cyprus, consulate in, 73-4, 123, 163, 196; mentioned, 2, 3, 23, 75, 158, 166, 168, 174, 203, 213, 217, 221.  
 Damascus, 15, 123.  
 Dardanelles, Peace of, 191.  
 Deputy-Governor, office of, 206-7.  
 Dorrington, George, 22, 75.  
 Dragomen, 225-7.  
 Drummond, William, 184.  
 Dublin, 195, 207.  
 Duckworth, Sir John, 189-90.  
 Dudley, Duchess of, 203.  
 Dundas, Henry, 173.  
 Dutch, the, appear in the Levant, 28; under English protection, 29; open trade with the East Indies, 30; secure capitulations, 47; rivalry of during the civil war, 54-5; mentioned, 67, 78; decline of their Levant trade, 99-100; losses in the Turkey convoy, 111; and the Leghorn trade, 139; revival of their trade, 144-5; benefit by English quarantine regulations, 149-50; and by the Levant Company's by-laws, 160-1; trade suffers in Napoleonic wars, 187.  
 Earthquakes, 245.  
 East India Company, link with the Levant Company, 31; and the spice trade, 43; efforts to trade in the Persian Gulf, 48-9; attacked by the Levant Company, 102-5; exports cloth to Persia, 114-18, 145; on the Levant Company, 127; and the opening of the Red Sea, 167-73;

- invades the Levant Company's monopoly, 186; mentioned, 21, 37, 72, 78, 204, 248.
- East Indies, 21, 30, 31, 47, 99.
- Eastland Company, 7.
- Effendi, Turkish, 228.
- Egypt, efforts to trade in, 32-5, 77-9, 124-5, 165-6; French designs on, 166-7; consul-general in appointed, 173; English trade with, 173-4; consulate suppressed, 174; results of Napoleon's expedition to, 180-8; falls out of Levant Company's monopoly, 185-6; treatment of Franks in, 234-5; mentioned, 4, 15, 17, 44, 128, 142, 144, 193, 197-8, 204, 240, 246.
- Eldred, John, 75.
- Elgin, Thomas, Earl of, 182-3, 242.
- Elizabeth, Queen, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 37, 52, 59, 74, 81.
- Elton, John, 145-6.
- Embassy, English, at Constantinople, dual character of, 12-13; heavy cost of, 26; dispute with king over appointment to, 87-8; diplomatic importance of after 1688, 130-1; manner of appointment to, 132-4; remuneration of, 134-5, 177-8; full control of by the government, 181-4; Turkish attitude towards, 230-2.
- Enos, 164.
- Estrées, Comte d', 110.
- Evelyn, John, 203.
- Eyles, Sir John, 137.
- Eyre, Sir John, 84-6.
- Factors, insubordination and frauds of during the civil war, 56-7; terms of service of, 215-16; private trading of, 216; control of, 216-17; attitude towards the Turks, 235-6; dress of, 240; recreations of, 240-2; country houses of, 243; marriage with Greeks, 244.
- Fawkener, Sir Everard, 175, 177, 222.
- Finch, Sir John, 98, 105, 128-9, 133, 134, 231, 232, 244.
- Fitch, Ralph, 21.
- Flanders Gallies, 3, 5.
- Fleetwood, Miles, consul in Egypt, 125, 165.
- Forde, Richard, consul at Algiers, 61.
- Forster, Richard, consul at Tripoli, 15, 75.
- Frampton, Robert, 235.
- Francis I, King of France, 2, 8.
- Freemasons, Lodges of, 241.
- French, the, establish trade with the Levant, 6; decline of their trade, 44-6; hostility of, 55; in Syria, 77, 123; in Egypt, 125; revival of their trade, 106-8, 119-20, 141-4; cloth manufactures of, 106-7; influence in Turkey, 109-10; trade of during wars of the 18th century, 148; and the opening of the Red Sea, 172-3; collapse of their trade after 1793, 186-8.
- Frizell, James, consul at Algiers, 62-3.
- Furs, trade in Russian and Canadian in Turkey, 159-60.
- Garraway, Arthur, 50.
- Garraway, Sir Henry, 42, 52, 205.
- Garraway, William, 22.
- Garraway, William, 94.
- Garret, William, 11.
- Genoa, 149.
- Germigny, Jacques de, 8-9, 13.
- Ghilan, 145.
- Gibraltar, 55, 56, 60, 110, 111.
- Gladstone, John and Robert, 195.
- Glasgow, 195.
- Gloucester College, Oxford, 227.
- Glover, Richard, consul in Cyprus, 74.
- Glover, Sir Thomas, 29, 49, 80-4, 85, 87, 222, 225.
- Gombroon, 49, 146.
- Governor, office of, 205-6, 207, 208.
- Greek Revolt, the, 198.
- Grenville, Lord, 182-3, 199-201, 206.
- Grenville, Henry, 176-7, 246.
- Grimsby, 195.
- Haagen, Cornelius van, 46-7.
- Hamburg, 47, 191.
- Hamden, Mr., of London, 22.
- Hammersley, Sir Hugh, 42, 205.
- Harbord, William, 131, 133, 222.
- Harborne, William, 8-10, 12-16, 25-6, 34, 72, 75, 80.
- Harley, Nathaniel, 111, 115, 120, 229, 243, 247.
- Harris, Dionysius, consul in Crete, 2.
- Harris, Richard, consul in Egypt, 166.
- Harvey, Sir Daniel, 101, 124, 128, 132, 134.
- Hassall, Mr., consul at Venice, 65.
- Hastings, Henry, consul at Aleppo, 218.
- Hastings, Warren, 168-9.
- Hautman, Cornelius, 30.
- Hayes, Anthony, consul at Smyrna, 169, 247.
- Henry III, King of France, 9.
- Henry IV, King of France, 45.
- Henry VII, 2.
- Henry VIII, 2.
- Hewitt, William, 7.
- Higsons, James, consul at Venice, 65.

- Hobson, John, senior, agent at Venice, 65.  
Hobson, John, junior, agent at Venice, 66.  
Hobson, Lancelot, consul at Athens, 122.  
Hormuz, 49.  
Hull, 195.  
Hunt, Henry, 63.  
Husband, office of, 206-7.  
Huskisson, William, 199-200.  
Hussey, Sir William, 122, 126, 131, 133, 206, 246.  
Hyder Ali of Mysore, 172.
- Ibrahim I, 44.  
Ibrahim Bey, 169, 171.  
Impositions, 209.  
Interloping, 51, 56, 139-40.  
Ironware exported to the Levant, 194.  
Ispahan, 48, 49, 103, 115.
- Jackson, Francis James, 182.  
Jaffa, 196.  
James I, 38, 39, 48, 50, 83.  
James II, 114, 130, 133.  
Janissaries, 228, 234.  
Jedda, 167-8, 169, 171.  
Jenkinson, Anthony, 2.  
Jerusalem, 15, 236.  
Jews, opposition to admission of, to the Levant Company, 155; admitted, 156; as brokers in the Levant, 214-15.  
Jones, Benjamin, consul at Athens, 122.  
Justiniano, 2.
- Kemble, Richard, consul at Salonika, 122.  
Killigrew, Admiral, 109-10.  
Kinloch, William, consul at Aleppo, 219.  
Kinnoull, George, Earl of, 174-5, 177, 225, 228, 238.  
Kiuprili, Achmet, 96, 99.  
Kosseir, 172.  
Kyd, Thomas, 5.
- Lagos, Bay of, 111.  
La Hogue, battle of, 110, 112.  
Lancashire, early cotton industry in, 74-5.  
Lancaster, James, 30.  
Lancelot, John, 91.  
Lancosme, Jacques de Savary de, 14.  
Larnaka, consulate at, 123, 163.  
Latachia, consulate at, 163, 196.  
Lawrence, Richard, 93-4.  
Leate, Huet, 63.  
Leate, Nicholas, 62.
- Leech, William, 21.  
Leeds, Duke of, 206.  
Leghorn, consulate at, 64-5; interloping trade via, 139-40; mentioned, 54, 55, 61, 63, 66, 148, 149, 154, 173, 191, 197, 213.  
Leith, 195.  
Lello, Henry, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 37, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 222.  
Lepanto, Battle of, 5.  
Levant Company, first charter of, 11; early progress, 17-18; charter expires, 19; second charter, 20-1; a regulated company, 21-3; its trade and development, 23-4; levies duties on currants and wine, 35; its charter cancelled and renewed, 36; renounces its patent, 37; dispute with the crown over the currant imposition, 38-9; given a new charter, 39-41; volume and character of its trade, 42-4; during the civil war period, 52-8; and the Zante currant trade, 69-70; regulation of the currant trade, 70-2; dispute with Sir Sackville Crowe, 89-92; given a new charter (1661), 95; and the traffic in debased coinage, 101; expansion of its trade, 102; attacks the East India Company, 102-5; decline of its trade after 1680, 105-8; and the war of 1689-97, 108-13; and the export of English cloth to Persia, 115-18; and French competition, 119-20; and the currant trade at Zante, 121; and the Syrian trade, 123-4; and trade in Egypt, 124-5; discourages new factories, 127-8; control of over the embassy reduced, 130-4; attacked for general shipping, 136-8; and the Leghorn trade, 138-40; decline of its trade (18th century), 141-53; accused of monopolistic spirit, 151-2; by-law of 1744 attacked, 152-3; proposal to lower terms of admission, 153-5; carried, 156-7; growth in numbers of, 157; meets increasing competition, 159-60; continued attacks on, 160-1; aided by the government, 161; and the opening of the Red Sea, 170-3; effect of the French war on its trade, 179-88; loses its control in Egypt, 185-6; new prosperity of, 191-5; increase in its numbers, 195; surrenders its charters, 200-2; place of assembly of, 208.  
Liddell, George, 199.  
Limesol, consulate at, 163.  
Liston, Robert, 178, 182, 246.



- Lithgow, William, 73, 78.  
 Liverpool, 157, 159, 195.  
 Lock, Charles, consul-general in Egypt, 185-6.  
 Lock, Michael, consul at Aleppo, 75.  
 London, 53, 76, 77, 95, 138, 152, 157, 159, 173, 195, 211.  
 London, Bishop of, 16.  
 Louis XIV, 99, 107, 110, 112, 130, 139, 166.  
 Lowe, Sir Thomas, 41, 205.  
  
 Macri, Constantine, agent at Alexandria, 166.  
 Maddar, imports of, 193.  
 Malta, 149.  
 Manchester, 74-5.  
 Mansel, Sir Robert, 61-2.  
 Mariani, Paulo, consul in Egypt, 33-4.  
 Marion, Mr., consul at Cairo, 166.  
 Markham, John, consul in Chios, 72.  
 Marlowe, Christopher, 5.  
 Marseilles, 46, 65, 100, 106, 140, 148, 149, 187, 197, 199, 216.  
 Maundrell, Henry, 235-6.  
 Merchant Adventurers, Company of, 51.  
 Messina, 149.  
 Midnall, John, 49.  
 Millers, Harvey, consul in Egypt, 15, 32-3.  
 Milos, 164, 196.  
 Missett, Colonel, 185.  
 Misteria duty, 143, 159, 213.  
 Mitylene, 164.  
 Mocha, 167.  
 Modon, 77.  
 Mohair, 72, 73, 140, 149, 162.  
 Mohammed III, 27.  
 Mohammed IV, 98.  
 Mohammed Abou Dahab, 168.  
 Mohammed Ali, 197, 235.  
 Montagu, Edward Wortley, 174.  
 Montagu, Lady Mary, 215, 243.  
 Morea, currant trade in, 70-2, 164, 196; mentioned, 68-9, 184.  
 Morier, Isaac, consul-general at Constantinople, 184, 186, 190, 192, 198.  
 Morier, John Philip, 184-5.  
 Morosini, 13.  
 Moscow, 146.  
 Mun, Thomas, 42, 43, 76.  
 Murad III, 8, 27.  
 Murray, John, 166, 169, 176-7.  
 Muscovy Company, 146-7.  
 Mustafa, Kara, 105, 128-30, 231, 244.  
 Mykonos, 123, 164.  
  
 Nadir Shah, 145-7.  
 Nathaglio, 164.  
 Nauplia, 196.  
  
 Navigation Acts, 138, 140, 146, 158-9, 179.  
 Newbery, John, 15, 17, 21.  
 Newcastle, Duke of, 142.  
 Nointel, Marquis de, 107, 237.  
 North, Dudley, 111, 214, 215, 233, 235, 247.  
 North, Lord, 206.  
 North, Roger, 215.  
 Nymwegen, Peace of, 102.  
  
 Oneby, Humphrey, agent at Algiers, 63.  
 Onslow, Sir Richard, 206.  
 Osborne, Sir Edward, 7, 11, 16, 17, 21.  
 Ostend, 158-9.  
 Outports, growing importance of, 195.  
  
 Paget, Sir Arthur, 190.  
 Paget, William Lord, 112, 125, 131-2, 133, 134, 213-14, 222, 224, 226.  
 Palaeologus, Manuel, 1.  
 Paros, 123.  
 Parvish, Henry, consul at Venice, 65.  
 Passarowitz, Peace of, 132.  
 Patras, consulate at, 15, 26, 68, 70, 121-2, 164, 196, 198.  
 Peel, Robert, 195.  
 Pennington, Isaac, 52, 208.  
 Pentlow, Samuel, 244, 248.  
 Persia, East India Company's export of cloth to, 115-18; distracted state of, 145; efforts to trade with via Russia, 146-7; mentioned, 3, 48, 72, 73, 75, 76, 103, 162.  
 Persian Gulf, 4, 21, 30, 48, 49, 115, 186.  
 Peter the Great, 145.  
 Philip II (of Spain), 6.  
 Phillips, Sir Thomas, 87-8.  
 Pindar, Sir Paul, 29, 42, 49, 80, 81, 84-5, 87, 242, 247.  
 Plague, 245-7.  
 Porter, James, 141, 142, 143, 148, 163, 175-6, 178, 222.  
 Portugal, 6, 7, 45.  
 Portuguese, 4, 5, 30, 49, 78.  
 Privateers, English, in the Levant, 25-6, 45, 50, 148.  
 —, French, 108, 110, 112, 120, 179.  
 Purnell, John, consul at Aleppo, 218-19.  
  
 Quarantine, 149-50.  
  
 Raisins, imports of, 193.  
 Red Sea, efforts to open, 167-73; opening of, 197-8; mentioned, 1, 3, 4, 61, 78, 104.  
 Reggio, George, consul in Crete, 196.

- Resht, 146-7.  
 Rhodes, 3, 5, 6.  
 Rhubarb, 147.  
 Rizzi, Don Gasparo di, 124.  
 Roberts, Lewis, 11, 43, 72, 75, 76.  
 Roe, Sir Thomas, 24, 42, 61, 62, 67, 68, 86-7, 88, 242.  
 Rooke, Sir George, 110-11.  
 Rosee, Pasqua, 203.  
 Rothschild, Nathaniel Meyer, 195.  
 Rupert, Prince, 57.  
 Russians, enter the Turkey trade, 159-60.  
 Rycaut, Sir Paul, 232.  
 Ryswick, Peace of, 110, 119, 139.  
  
 Salonika, consulate at, 122, 164-5, 196; mentioned, 128, 158, 192, 217, 218.  
 Salt, Henry, consul-general in Egypt, 185.  
 Salter, Nicholas, 24.  
 Salway, Richard, 93-4.  
 Sanderson, John, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32, 34, 37, 64, 75, 81, 87.  
 Sandwich, Earl of, 154.  
 Sandys, George, 72, 78.  
 Sandys, Lord, 154.  
 Sandys, Thomas, consul at Aleppo, 75.  
 Scanderoon, 23, 24, 68, 76, 77, 86, 123, 126, 157, 158, 162-3, 174, 210, 211, 213, 218, 229, 247.  
 Sebastiani, General, 185, 189, 190.  
 Seymour, Edward, 2.  
 Shakespeare, William, 6.  
 Shaw, John, 168-9.  
 Shelley, Sir Richard, 2.  
 Ships: *Cog Anne*, 1.  
     *Katherine Sturmy*, 1-2.  
     *Royall Defence*, 49.  
     *Hercules*, 54.  
     *Angel*, 77.  
     *Swallow*, 169.  
     *Endymion*, 189-90.  
     *Eagle*, 210-11.  
     *Hunter*, 211.  
     Hire of by the Company, 210-11.  
 —, General, 136-8, 152, 154, 210-12.  
 Shirley, Sir Anthony, 48.  
 Shirley, Robert, 48.  
 Sidon, 75, 77, 123, 236.  
 Silk, Persian, trade in, 48, 49, 73, 76, 103, 116-18, 145, 146-7, 193.  
 Sira, 196.  
 Slaves, English, the redemption of, 203-4.  
 Smith, Sir Sidney, 179, 182.  
 Smith, Spencer, 181-3.  
 Smith, Sir Thomas, 11, 31, 205.  
 Smyrna, factory and trade at, 70-3, 125-6, 195-6; mentioned, 4, 42, 44, 47, 54, 57, 58, 74, 75, 77, 90, 91, 97, 98, 99, 100, 109, 116, 122, 129, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 157, 158, 162, 164, 172, 174, 191, 210, 211, 213, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 226, 227, 234, 237, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247.  
 Soames, Sir William, 130, 133.  
 Somers, Sir John, 114.  
 Southampton, 5, 51-2.  
 South Sea House, 199, 208.  
 Spain, war with, 55-6, 179; mentioned, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 20, 26, 37, 45, 62, 65, 74, 83, 107, 137, 149, 197, 212.  
 Spencer, Sir John, 22.  
 Stangate Creek, 150.  
 Stanyan, Abraham, 174-5, 222.  
 Staper, Richard, 7, 11, 17, 21, 22, 24, 32.  
 Storie, James, 21.  
 Straton, Alexander, 183-4.  
 Sturmy, Robert, 1.  
 Suez, 168-73, 197-8.  
 Suffolk, Earl of, 39.  
 Sugar, exports to the Levant, 194.  
 Suleiman the Magnificent, 2, 5, 6, 8, 107.  
 Surat, 48.  
 Sutton, Sir Robert, 119, 120, 132, 133, 134, 177, 226, 227, 232.  
 Syria, 2, 3, 4, 15, 17, 24, 37, 74, 107, 203.  
  
 Taylor, Richard, 63.  
 Tchesmé, Battle of, 234.  
 Teixeira, Pedro, 76.  
 Temeens, trade in, 100-1.  
 Tenedos, 213.  
 Tin, export of, 194.  
 Tinos, 164.  
 Tippoo, Sultan, 172.  
 Tipton, John, consul at Algiers, 15, 59, 61.  
 Toulon, 108, 110, 112.  
 Tourville, Admiral, 110, 112.  
 Towerson, James, 75.  
 Treasurer, office of, in England, 207-8; in the Levant, 220-1.  
 Trebizond, 49.  
 Tripoli (Barbary), 15, 16, 59.  
 — (Syria), consulate at, 15, 76-7, 123-4, 163, 196; mentioned, 22, 75, 217.  
 Trumbull, Sir William, 109, 122, 125, 130-1, 133, 174, 206, 226, 241.  
 Trusting, oath against, 214.  
 Tunis, efforts to trade at, 61-4; mentioned, 15, 59, 77.

- Turkey, outbreak of war with, 1807, 188-90.
- Turner, Thomas, vice-consul at Alexandria, 173.
- Utrecht, Peace of, 139.
- Velutelli, Acerbo, 18, 35.
- Venice, decline of her Levant trade, 4, 44, 107-8; consulate and trade at, 65-6; and the Zante currant trade, 67-70; mentioned, 23, 24, 25, 64, 73, 77, 121, 149, 176, 187, 238.
- Venice Company, founded, 18; charter expires, 19; fused with the Levant Company, 20.
- Vento, Christofero, 33.
- Verney, John, 215, 229, 246, 248.
- Villeneuve, Marquis de, 142, 144.
- Walsingham, Sir Francis, 10, 12.
- Werry, Francis, consul at Smyrna, 247.
- Weymouth, Lord, 170.
- Wheeler, Sir Francis, 112.
- Wilkinson, William, consul at Bucharest, 196-7.
- William III, 130, 133.
- Winchilsea, Henneage Finch, Earl of, 51, 79, 96-7, 124, 128, 132, 134, 135, 227, 246.
- Wolfe, John, 90.
- Wood, Benjamin, 30.
- Wood, R., 227.
- Woollen goods, exported to the Levant, 194.
- Wyche, Sir Peter, 88-9.
- Zante, currant trade in, 24, 43, 44, 66-70, 121, 164, 196; mentioned, 15, 224, 247.
- Zea, 196.